DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 365 167 FL 021 894

AUTHOR McArthur, Edith K.
TITLE Language Characteristics and Schooling in the United States, A Changing Picture: 1979 and 1989.
INSTITUTION National Center for Education Statistics (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-16-042998-6; NCES-93-699
PUB DATE Nov 93
NOTE 73p.
AVAILABLE FROM U.S. Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, Mail Stop: SSOP, Washington, DC 20402-9328.
PUB TYPE Statistical Data (110) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Students; Demography; Elementary School Students; Elementary Secondary Education; English (Second Language); Immigrants; *Language Fluency; *Language Proficiency; *Limited English Speaking; Minority Groups; *Population Trends; Secondary School Students; Second Language Learning; Second Languages; Sociocultural Patterns; *Statistical Data; *Student Characteristics

ABSTRACT

In 1989, the number of persons in the United States who spoke languages other than English at home was at an all-time high. This number has increased rapidly in recent years as immigration flows have brought in new residents who are native speakers of other languages. To accommodate persons who speak languages other than English, changes are being made in school systems, in the workplace, and in health and social support systems. This report is the first to present information about recent changes that have occurred in the composition and characteristics of persons who speak languages other than English in the United States. It discusses trends between 1979 and 1989 in the numbers and demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of non-English language speakers. The report also focuses on the relationship between language usage and progress through school of children 8 to 15 years old and schooling of persons 16 to 24 years old. Appended are a list of data sources and definitions, information on alternate measures of non-English language usage and English language proficiency, information on accuracy of estimates and statistical procedures, and standard error tables. (KM)

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Language Characteristics and Schooling in the United States, A Changing Picture: 1979 and 1989

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November 1993

For sale by the U.S. Government Printing Office
Superintendent of Documents, Mail Stop: SSOP, Washington, DC 20402-9328
ISBN 0-16-042998-6

Highlights

What were the major languages spoken in the United States as of 1989?

- In 1989, Spanish (14.5 million speakers), French (1.1 million speakers), Italian (906,000 speakers), German (849,000 speakers), Chinese languages (834,000 speakers), Czech (662,000 speakers), Philippine languages (638,000 speakers), Korean (503,000 speakers) each had more than one-half million speakers. (Table 2)

- Spanish was spoken by 58 percent of all speakers of languages other than English. Other European languages (as a group) were spoken by 21 percent, Asian and Pacific Island languages by 14 percent, and all other languages by 7 percent of all persons who reported speaking a language other than English at home.

How had language usage changed between 1979 and 1989?

- Between 1979 and 1989, the number of persons 5 years and older in the United States who were reported to speak a language other than English at home increased by about 40 percent, from 9 percent of the population in 1979 to about 12 percent in 1989. (Table 2)

- Between 1979 and 1989, the number of Spanish speakers 5 years and older increased by 65 percent and the number of speakers of Asian and Pacific Island languages increased by 98 percent. During the same period the number of speakers of European languages (other than Spanish) decreased by 18 percent. (Table 2)

Were there differences in the ages of persons speaking languages other than English?

- The age distribution of speakers of non-English languages varied by specific language spoken. For some languages, the age distribution was relatively young, e.g., over one-third of Cambodian, Lao, and Vietnamese speakers were of school-age, that is, 5 to 17 years old. The speakers of some other languages were relatively old; e.g., over 40 percent of Hungarian, Italian, Norwegian, Polish, and Yiddish speakers were 65 years old or older. (Table 3)

Did persons who spoke languages other than English have difficulty speaking English?

- Almost half of Spanish speakers and over half of Asian and Pacific Island language speakers reported speaking English with difficulty in 1989, while almost one-third of speakers of other European languages reported difficulty speaking English. (Table 5)

- Among all speakers of non-English languages, the proportion of persons with difficulty speaking English was lower among persons under 25 than among persons 25 years old and over. (See Table 7)

Were all non-English speakers born outside the United States?

- Almost half of all persons who spoke languages other than English at home and one quarter of all persons reporting difficulty speaking English were born in the 50 States or the District of Columbia. (Table 8)

How was a child's language use related to his or her schooling?

- The proportion of all students age 8 to 15 enrolled below modal grade (that is, the grade in which most children of an age are enrolled at the beginning of a school year) increased from 25 percent in 1979 to 35 percent in 1989 (Table 9).

- In 1979, among children who were reported to have difficulty speaking English, 53 percent were enrolled below the modal grade for their age, much higher than for English-only children (24 percent). In 1989, this proportion had dropped 15 percentage points, to 38 percent, and was about the same as for English-only speakers (34 percent). (Table 9)

Are persons 16 to 24 years old who speak other langauges at a disadvantage in their education?

- In 1989, Spanish-speaking persons 16 to 24 years old had higher dropout rates compared to English-only speakers and speakers of other European languages and speakers of Asian and Pacific Island languages (31 percent compared to between 9 and 11 percent). (Table 13)

- Among persons who spoke languages other than English and reported speaking English very well, 14 percent had dropped out of school before completing high school. Among persons who reported difficulty speaking English, 42 percent had dropped out of school. (Table 14)

- Spanish speakers were over twice as likely not to be currently enrolled and not to have completed high school than were speakers of other languages who had similar language abilities. (Table 14)

- In 1989, college enrollment of persons who spoke languages other than English and spoke English very well was similar to that of English-only speakers. However, for persons who reported difficulty speaking English, college enrollment was just over one-third of persons who spoke English very well. (See Table 14)

Table of Contents

Highlights iii

Acknowledgments vi

Introduction 1

Background 1

Measuring Non-English Language and Usage and English Ability 3

Changes between 1979 and 1989 in Distribution of Language Usage, Difficulty Speaking English and Age 5

Characteristics of Persons by Language Spoken 12

Non-English Language Background, English Ability, and Progress through School 22

Non-English Language Background, English Ability, and Schooling 28

Summary 36

Appendix A. Data Sources and Definitions 39

Appendix B. Alternate Measures of Non-English Language Usage and English Language Proficiency 43

Appendix C. Accuracy of Estimates and Statistical Procedures 47

Appendix D. Standard Error Tables 49

References 67

Acknowledgments

This report was prepared under the guidance of John Ralph, Chief of the Policy and Review Branch, and under the general direction of Jeanne E. Griffith, Associate Commissioner for Data Development. The high professional standards and discerning judgement of the reviewers were crucial to the quality and relevance of the report. Within the National Center for Education Statistics, Mary Frase and John Burkett painstakingly reviewed several drafts, and Andrew Kolstad and Marilyn McMillen provided insightful suggestions. Elsewhere within the Education Department, John Chapman of the Budget Service, David Moguel of the Planning and Evaluation Service, and Gil Garcia of the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs reviewed the report in draft and provided very useful comments. Outside the Department of Education, Reynaldo Macias of the University of California, Santa Barbara and Leo F. Estrada, University of California, Los Angeles, reviewed this report in draft and provided valuable contributions. Programming of data tabulations was ably performed by Jude Corina of Pinkerton Computer Consultants, Inc. The report was edited by Suellen Mauchamer.

LANGUAGE AND SCHOOLING IN THE UNITED STATES, A CHANGING PICTURE: 1979 AND 1989

Introduction

In the United States in 1989, the number of persons who spoke languages other than English at home was at an all-time-high. This number has increased rapidly in recent years as immigration flows have brought in new residents who spoke other languages. To accommodate persons who speak languages other than English, changes are being made in school systems, in the workplace, in health and social support systems. This report is the first to present information about recent changes that have occurred in the composition and characteristics of persons who speak languages other than English in the United States. It discusses trends between 1979 and 1989 in the numbers and demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of non-English language speakers. The report also focusses on the relationship between language usage and progress through school of children 8 to 15 years old and schooling of persons 16 to 24 years old.

Background

The high levels of immigration in the two decades since 1970 resulted in much greater numbers of persons who spoke languages other than English. Table 1 shows the 10-year immigration flows into the United States from the 1820s to the 1980s.[1] Using decennial census counts from 1830 through 1990, the table also shows the number and proportion of the population that had immigrated during the previous 10-year period. During the decade of the 1980s, 9 million people are estimated to have immigrated to the United States. This was slightly above the previous high of 8.9 million immigrants between 1900 and 1910. Because of the high immigration during the 1970s as well (7 million immigrants), more new immigrants had entered the United States in the last 20 years than in any similar period in its history.[2] Historically, however, relative to the total United States population, immigration had the greatest impact during the first decade of this century. In 1910, the ratio of new immigrants to the population was almost 10 percent. Although much of the increase in non-English language usage was due to recent immigration, 48 percent of all non-English language users were born in the 50 States or the District of Columbia (see Table 8). Thus, there appears to have been significant language maintenance among non-English language communities.

Given the large numbers of new immigrants from non-English speaking countries whose first language is other than English, there may have been more limited-English proficient persons in the United States than at any other time in recent history. The recognition that a person's limited-English proficiency might result in lack of access to services and rights

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[1]Jeffrey Passel and Barry Edmonston, the Urban Institute, Policy and Research Report, Winter/Spring 1992. These estimates include illegal aliens, agricultural workers, and persons seeking asylum in the United States (see Passel and Edmonston, 1992).

[2]As many new immigrants only stay in the country temporarily, the ten-year immigration flows should not be added together to derive a total number of recent immigrants.

Table 1. Ten-year flows of immigration to the United States and their impact on the total United States population: 1830-1990

(Numbers in millions)

Census year	Census count (millions)	Immigration during prior decade	
		Number (millions)	Percent of census count
1830	12.9	0.1	0.8
1840	17.1	0.6	3.5
1850	23.2	1.7	7.3
1860	31.4	2.6	8.3
1870	38.6	2.3	6.0
1880	50.2	2.8	5.6
1890	63.0	5.2	8.3
1900	76.2	3.7	4.9
1910	92.2	8.9	9.7
1920	106.0	5.8	5.5
1930	123.2	4.1	3.3
1940	132.2	0.5	0.4
1950	151.3	1.0	0.7
1960	179.3	2.5	1.4
1970	203.3	3.8	1.9
1980	226.5	7.0	3.1
1990	248.7	9.0	3.6

NOTE: Included in estimates of immigration are illegal aliens, agricultural workers, and persons seeking asylum in the United States.

SOURCE: 1830 to 1980 Census counts from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, U.S. Summary, Number of Inhabitants, PC80-1-A1, Table 8. Estimates of immigration by Jeffrey Passel and Barry Edmonston, the Urban Institute, Policy and Research Report, Winter/Spring 1992.

led to the passage of legislation such as the Voting Rights Act of 1975[3] and the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 which provides grants to school districts to serve limited-English proficient children.

Education policy debates about the merit of schools using non-English languages for instruction were not new to the period since 1970; similar arguments were made in the late nineteenth century. Tyack and Hansot (1982) described some of the discussions. By the late 1880s, eight States had statutes permitting bilingual instruction in public schools; on the other hand, in some of the States during the nineteenth century, legislation was advocated which would forbid foreign languages in elementary schools.

Measuring Non-English Language Usage and English Ability

Through the mid-1970s, there were no counts of persons who currently spoke a language other than English. In addition, there was no information about how proficient non-English speakers were in English. There were neither generally accepted definitions nor measures for these concepts. However, it was recognized that the question on the 1970 decennial census (which was also used periodically in surveys such as the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey) concerning "mother tongue" or "language spoken in childhood home" would lead to overestimates of current non-English language usage (McArthur and Siegel, 1983).

The Department of Education's primary interest in language usage questions has been for school-age children. The concept of Limited-English Proficiency (LEP) was developed as part of the Bilingual Education Act, to identify those language-minority students (children from language backgrounds other than English) who needed language assistance services, in their own language and in English.[4] In practice, there are many ways currently being used for identifying individual students who need such services in school systems across the United States. Such methods only identify the school-age population in school, because that is the group to be served. They provide no estimate of the numbers of such persons who are not in school or who are in other age groups.

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[3]The Voting Rights Act requires that electoral and voting materials be available in major non-English languages spoken in voting jurisdictions, under certain conditions.

[4]The Bilingual Education Act (part of P.L. 100-297) provides competitive, voluntary, discretionary grants to school districts and other entities to implement special education services for students whose English ability is limited. It provides a description of a limited English proficient (LEP) student as one who:

(1) meets one or more of the following conditions:
   (a) the student was born outside of the United States or whose native language is not English;
   (b) the student comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; or
   (c) the student is American Indian or Alaskan Native and comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on his/her level of English language proficiency; and

(2) has sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language to deny him or her the opportunity to learn successfully in English-only classrooms.

In an attempt to create a consistent measure that would provide national-level estimates for the whole population of speakers of languages other than English in the United States, the Census Bureau and the Office of Education of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (which became the Department of Education in 1980), developed a detailed set of questions on current language use which would also serve as a bridge from the old mother tongue question. Several of these questions were modified and adapted for use in the November 1979 and 1989 Current Population Survey (CPS), and the 1980 and 1990 decennial censuses. Each of these national "surveys" asked at least the following questions:

- Do you speak a language other than English at home?
- What is that language? and
- How well do you speak English? -- with response categories: very well, well, not well, not at all.

Those questions, and in particular the question on English speaking ability, are subjective. It is not possible to apply an objective standard to a person's reporting of their own English speaking ability, or even more subjective, the ability of other household members. In addition, because speaking a language is only one part of total language proficiency (which includes also listening, reading, and writing), research was needed to determine what the relationship was between reported speaking ability and the remaining parts of English language proficiency. As a means of validating the English speaking ability question as a measure of total language proficiency, the English Language Proficiency Survey (ELPS) was sponsored by the Department of Education and carried out by the Census Bureau in 1982. That survey included a lengthier set of questions about different parts of the spectrum of English language proficiency as well as tests which measured English writing, reading, listening, and speaking abilities, geared to age. These tests were administered to respondents who were selected from a sample based upon 1980 census reports of language usage.

The results of that survey revealed a strong correlation between responses on the English speaking ability question and the test scores of English proficiency (Kominski, 1989).[5] Although it would not be advisable to use a person's reporting on the English language ability question as a diagnostic tool for determining an individual's need for language services, it was appropriate to use the results as an aggregate measure to estimate the size of the limited-English proficient population. In 1986, the Department of Education used the ELPS data to develop an estimate of the school-age limited-English proficient population. The ELPS estimate of limited-English proficient children age 5 to 17 years old corresponded to 70 percent of persons who reported speaking a language other than English at home and speaking English less than "very well."

[5]The test used in the English Language Proficiency Study established a pass score which was scaled using a control group of English-only speakers. It was found that persons who had reported English speaking ability of "very well" passed at a rate similar to the English-only persons; persons who reported less than "very well," i.e., "well," "not well," or "not at all" had significantly higher rates of failure.

This report makes the assumption that all persons who spoke a language other than English at home and who were reported to speak English "well," "not well," or "not at all" (i.e., less than "very well") had difficulty in English. It is important to distinguish this group from those persons defined in the Bilingual Education Act as "Limited-English Proficient," which involves a more formal set of criteria applied by States and school districts (described in footnote 4) to identify individuals whose level of English language proficiency would prevent them from learning successfully in English-only classrooms. Because no such formal criteria have been used to diagnose individuals in the surveys used in this paper, here they will be referred to as persons who have difficulty speaking English. There are other estimates of the total number of non-English language persons or those of limited-English proficiency which have been developed using other methodologies (several of these are described in Appendix B).

The monthly Current Population Survey conducted by the United States Bureau of the Census collected information about language usage of persons 5 years old and over in November 1979 and November 1989. In the following sections of this report these data are used:

- to look at changes in the numbers and proportions of persons speaking languages other than English and their English ability;
- to look at the characteristics of persons who speak languages other than English at home, such as immigration status, age distribution, educational attainment, and family income;
- to look at possible linkages between language spoken at home, progress through school of children 8 to 15 years old and other characteristics such as race and ethnicity, immigration status, difficulty speaking English, and parent's education; and
- to look at the relationship between schooling of 16- to 24-year-olds by language characteristics and difficulty speaking English, immigration status, and parent's education.

Changes between 1979 and 1989 in Distribution of Language Usage, Difficulty Speaking English and Age

Between 1979 and 1989, the number of persons 5 years old and over reported to speak a language other than English at home rose about 40 percent from 18 to 25 million (Table 2). By 1989, about 12 percent of the United States population spoke a language other than English at home, up from 9 percent in 1979. Given the significant increase in the number of speakers of languages other than English, the distribution of reported English ability among those persons changed only slightly between 1979 and 1989; in 1979, 42

Table 2. Change in numbers of speakers of languages other than English and percentage among persons 5 years old and over from 1979 to 1989 (Numbers in thousands)

Language	1979		1989		Change 1979-89*	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Total 5 years and over	200,812	100.0	225,601	100.0	24,789	12.3
Total with reported language characteristics	194,300	96.8	214,100	94.9	19,800	10.2
Total reporting a language other than English	17,632	100.0	24,837	100.0	7,205	40.9
(Percent of persons with reported language who speak language other than English)	9.1	--	11.6	--	--	--
Spanish	8,768	49.7	14,489	58.3	5,721	65.2
Other European languages	6,300	35.7	5,160	20.8	(1,140)	(18.1)
French	987	5.6	1,082	4.4	95	9.6
Italian	1,354	7.7	906	3.6	(448)	(33.1)
German	1,261	7.2	849	3.4	(413)	(32.7)
Polish	731	4.1	454	1.8	(277)	(37.9)
Portuguese	245	1.4	395	1.6	150	61.2
Greek	366	2.1	284	1.1	(82)	(22.3)
Creole	20	0.1	187	0.8	167	(B)
Yiddish	234	1.3	161	0.6	(73)	(31.2)
Hungarian	106	0.6	124	0.5	18	17.0
Russian	65	0.4	116	0.5	51	(B)
Norwegian	77	0.4	92	0.4	15	19.5
Swedish	64	0.4	83	0.3	19	(B)
Dutch	97	0.6	80	0.3	(17)	(17.5)
Slovak	82	0.5	75	0.3	(7)	(8.5)
Czech	116	0.7	66	0.3	(50)	(43.1)
Finnish	68	0.4	63	0.3	(5)	(B)
Ukrainian	82	0.5	57	0.2	(25)	(30.5)
Serbocroatian	119	0.7	54	0.2	(65)	(54.6)
Lithuanian	62	0.4	33	0.1	(29)	(B)
Asian and Pacific Island languages	1,718	9.7	3,395	13.7	1,677	97.6
Chinese languages	514	2.9	834	3.4	320	62.3
Philippine languages	419	2.4	638	2.6	219	52.2
Korean	191	1.1	503	2.0	312	163.1
Vietnamese	157	0.9	398	1.6	241	153.6
Japanese	265	1.5	370	1.5	105	39.7
Asian Indian languages	98	0.6	284	1.1	186	190.1
Lao	--	--	181	0.7	--	--
Cambodian	7	0.0	145	0.6	138	(B)
Thai	32	0.2	42	0.2	10	(B)
Other languages	845	4.8	1,793	7.2	948	112.1
Arabic	177	1.0	357	1.4	180	101.4
American Indian/Alaska Native languages	185	1.1	240	1.0	55	29.7
Persian	91	0.5	156	0.6	65	71.6
Armenian	74	0.4	113	0.5	39	(B)
Other unlisted	318	1.8	926	3.7	608	191.3

Notes for Table 2.

* Numbers in parentheses indicate a negative figure.

-- Not applicable or not available.

(B) The base of the derived figure is less than 75,000.

NOTE: In general, this table matches the data from the previous table. "Other unlisted" includes some languages in the 1989 tabulations which, in the 1979 tabulations were grouped with "Other European" or "Asian and Pacific Island." If the 1979 figures were adjusted to match those available for 1989:

- o the "Other European" category would decline by 165 thousand;
- o the "Asian and Pacific Island" category would decline by 35 thousand;
- o the "Other Language" category and the "Other unlisted" subcategory would each increase by 200 thousand.

Some categories represent groups of languages. These include: American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian Indian, Chinese and Philippine.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November Current Population Survey, 1979 and 1989.

Table 3. Age distribution of persons 5 years and over who speak languages other than English: 1989 (Numbers in thousands)

Language	1989	Age		
	Total	5 - 17	18 - 64	65 +
		%	%	%
American Indian/ Alaska Native	240.4	19.8	56.9	23.3
Arabic	357.3	23.8	71.1	5.1
Armenian	113.0	22.1	66.6	11.2
Asian Indian	283.7	21.5	73.5	5.0
Cambodian	144.9	39.5	59.7	0.8
Chinese	834.0	16.5	72.6	10.9
Creole	186.5	19.9	79.0	1.1
Dutch	80.0	4.1	64.8	31.1
French	1,081.7	12.1	70.1	17.8
German	848.6	7.2	66.3	26.5
Greek	283.6	15.4	74.6	10.0
Hungarian	123.6	10.0	42.2	47.9
Italian	906.1	4.4	54.1	41.5
Japanese	370.3	10.1	63.7	26.1
Korean	502.8	24.8	69.9	5.3
Lao	181.2	35.3	61.9	2.9
Norwegian	92.0	6.4	39.7	54.1
Persian (Farsi)	156.0	14.5	81.8	3.7
Philippine	637.9	16.6	73.8	9.6
Polish	454.3	6.6	51.0	42.3
Portugesee	395.2	16.2	70.4	13.4
Russian	116.3	10.1	62.8	27.2
Spanish	14,489.2	24.8	69.1	6.2
Swedish	83.4	25.3	49.4	25.3
Vietnamese	397.9	34.1	62.8	3.1
Yiddish	160.8	23.8	32.2	44.1
Other	926.2	21.6	69.5	9.0
TOTAL	24,837.2	21.0	67.5	11.4

NOTE: Some categories represent groups of languages. These include: American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian Indian, Chinese and Philippine. Only languages with at least 75,000 reported speakers are shown. Detail may not add to 100 percent due to rounding

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November Current Population Survey, 1979 and 1989.

percent reported speaking English less than very well; in 1989, 47 percent reported speaking English less than very well (see Table 5).[6]

Table 2 contains a listing of languages spoken by non-English language speakers for 1979 and 1989, including an "other" category which contains only about 3 to 4 percent of all non-English language speakers. In 1979 and 1989, the most frequently reported languages were Spanish, French, Italian, and German. But there were changes in the rankings of numbers of persons speaking other languages. The number of speakers of Spanish grew from 8.8 million to 14.5 million, representing 58 percent of all non-English language speakers (Figure 1). Although there was a decline in the total number of speakers of "Other European languages," languages in that category still represented 21 percent of all non-English language usage in the United States. The number of speakers of "Asian and Pacific Island languages" grew from 1.7 million to 3.4 million between 1979 and 1989, so that in 1989 they represented 14 percent of all non-English language speakers in the United States. The number of speakers of all other languages grew from 845,000 to 1.8 million between 1979 and 1989.

The number of persons 5 years and older reporting some of these languages grew by 50 percent or more reflecting recent waves of immigration (see Table 2). These languages included Arabic, Asian Indian languages, Chinese, Korean, Persian, Philippine languages, Portuguese, Spanish, and Vietnamese. The number of persons reporting some other languages did not grow or even declined in number. For example, the number of speakers of languages such as Czech, German, Italian, Polish, Serbocroatian, Ukrainian, and Yiddish, which reflect past waves of immigration, declined by over 30 percent between 1979 and 1989.

The languages are shown (Table 3) for three age groups relevant to different kinds of policy and planning interests: the school-age population (persons 5 to 17 years old), the population of working age (18 to 64 years old), and the elderly (persons 65 and over, who are generally out of the labor force and drawing more heavily on social and medical services). In general the age distribution of all persons who reported speaking languages other than English did not change from 1979 to 1989, with about two-thirds being of working age and one-fifth of school-age. In addition, the age distribution was almost the same as that for the total U.S. population (see Table 4). However, there were differences in the age distributions among languages. Some of the languages were represented by a relatively young population, with high proportions (over one-third) of school-age children -- Cambodian, Lao, and Vietnamese. Others were represented by much older populations likely to need social services, and access to nursing homes and medicaid; over 40 percent of Hungarian, Italian, Norwegian, Polish and Yiddish speakers were 65 years or older.

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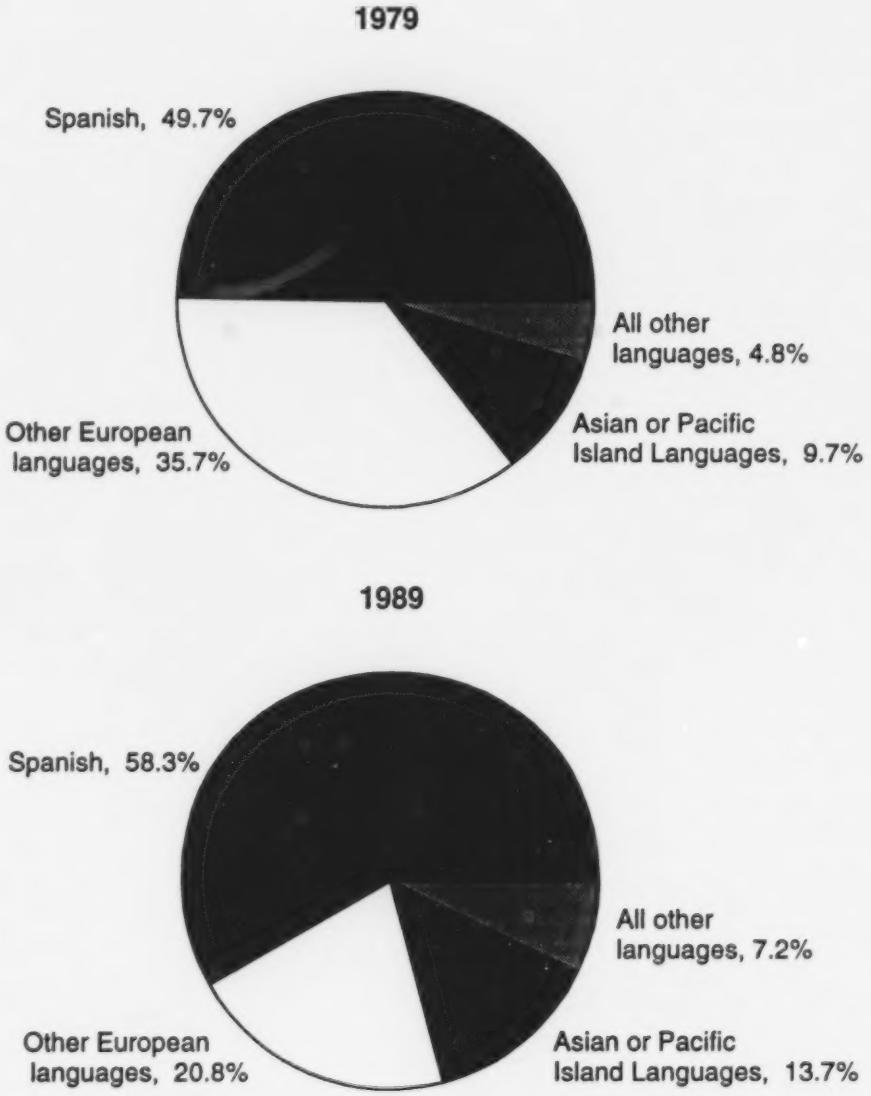
[6] Although the 1979 and 1989 CPS and the 1980 and 1990 Censuses all used the same series of three questions about language usage, the CPS numbers of persons speaking a language other than English at home were significantly lower than the immediately following censuses. Even though the numbers were lower, the percentage that they represent of the total population with reported language characteristics was similar, and the reporting of language speaking ability was not significantly different. For a discussion of differences between decennial census and CPS methodology and results, refer to Appendix B.

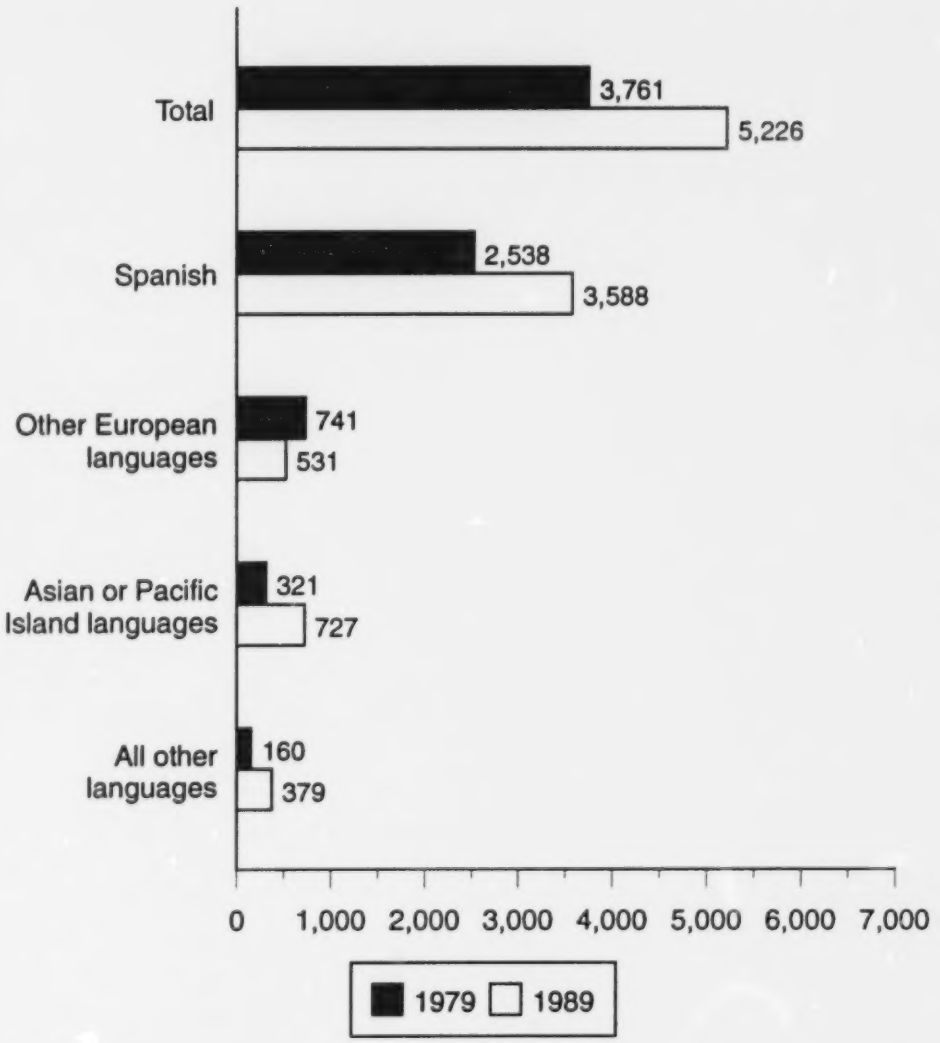
Figure 1. Language spoken by persons 5 years old and over who speak a non-English language at home: 1979 and 1989



NOTE: The total population 5 years and older who reported speaking a language other than English was 17,632,000 in 1979 and 24,837,000 in 1989.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November Current Population Survey, 1979 and 1989.

Figure 2. Language characteristics of children 5 to 17 years old who speak a non-English language at home: 1979 and 1989 (number in thousands)



NOTE: The total population of 5- to 17-year-olds with reported language characteristics was 45,103,00 in 1979 and 42,166,000 in 1989.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November Current Population Survey, 1979 and 1989.

Table 2 makes it clear that the non-English speaking population was over half "Spanish". (This population was in itself extremely diverse representing peoples originally from the American Southwest, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and many other Spanish speaking countries.) Because the sample size was small, the remaining languages (other than Spanish) were grouped in order to facilitate discussion. In these broader language groups, the reader should be cautious not to assume that there were no differences among the various languages.[7] The four larger categories shown in Table 2 were those planned for tabulations from the 1990 census: Spanish, other European, Asian and Pacific Island languages, and all other languages.

Characteristics of Persons by Language Spoken

This section summarizes trends from 1979 to 1989 in the characteristics of persons by the language they reported speaking. Selected characteristics are described for persons who were reported to speak only English at home, all persons who were reported to speak a language other than English, and the four broad language groups.[8] This section contains discussion about the relationship between language usage and age distribution, immigration status, English ability, frequency of language usage relative to English, family income, and educational attainment.

Among school-age children (5 to 17 years old) there had been great changes in the numbers of speakers of languages other than English (see Figure 2). Although the total number of children in this age group (who had reported language characteristics) dropped by about 3 million over the decade to about 42.2 million in 1989, the number of speakers of languages other than English grew from 3.8 million to 5.2 million (from 8 percent to 12 percent of all school-age children). The number of Spanish speakers grew from 2.5 million to 3.6 million (from 6 to 9 percent of all school-age children). The number of children reported to speak Asian and Pacific Island languages more than doubled over the decade, from 321,000 to 727,000 children (increasing from about 1 percent of all school-age children to about 2 percent in 1989).

In 1979 and in 1989, about half of all persons who were reported to speak a language other than English at home were born outside the 50 States and the District of Columbia, whereas almost none of those persons who spoke only English were (Table 4). Looking at the different language groups, substantial differences in immigration distributions can be seen there as well. In 1989, 30 percent of persons speaking the "other European" languages were born outside the 50 States and the District of Columbia, compared to just under half of the Spanish speakers, about 60 percent of persons who spoke the "other languages," and over 75 percent of those who spoke the Asian/Pacific Island languages. In 1989, over one-fifth of all the Asian/Pacific language speakers and "other language"

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[7] The 1990 census data will enable analysis of the language characteristics of persons at smaller geographic levels with more detail about specific languages spoken.

[8] The variables in table 5 and later tables are only a small portion of those collected in the Current Population Survey; for example, also of interest but not described here, are family or household composition, labor force, and employment characteristics.

Table 4. Age and immigration status of persons 5 years and over by language spoken at home: 1979 and 1989

(Totals in thousands. Distributions shown as percentage of population.)

Year and population characteristic	Total 1/	Language spoken at home: English only	Speak other languages				
			Total	Spanish	Other European	Asian or Pacific Island	All other
Total persons, 1979	200,812	176,319	17,631	8,768	6,300	1,718	845
Total persons, 1989	225,601	187,632	24,837	14,489	5,160	3,395	1,793
AGE DISTRIBUTION, 1979	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
5 to 17 years	23.1	23.4	21.3	29.0	11.8	18.7	18.9
18 to 24 years	13.9	14.1	12.6	15.4	8.0	12.9	17.6
25 to 44 years	29.6	29.5	31.0	34.6	22.7	38.4	40.6
45 to 64 years	21.7	21.5	21.8	15.8	31.6	20.5	13.3
65 years and over	11.7	11.4	13.3	5.3	26.0	9.4	9.5
AGE DISTRIBUTION, 1989	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
5 to 17 years	20.1	19.5	20.9	24.8	10.3	21.4	21.2
18 to 24 years	11.2	11.0	12.5	14.9	8.3	9.0	9.7
25 to 44 years	35.2	35.5	35.9	37.2	27.4	41.1	40.8
45 to 64 years	20.5	20.7	19.3	17.0	25.7	19.4	18.5
65 years and over	13.0	13.3	11.5	6.2	28.2	9.2	9.8
IMMIGRATION STATUS, 1979	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Born in 50 States or D.C.	93.5	97.4	50.2	53.5	55.7	20.0	38.5
Born in Puerto Rico	0.4	0.0	4.3	8.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Born in U.S. Outlying Area	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.5	0.0
Born outside U.S.	6.1	2.5	45.3	37.4	44.3	79.5	61.4
Year to U.S.:							
1975-1979	1.4	0.3	11.4	9.6	4.9	33.8	31.6
1970-1974	1.0	0.3	9.1	9.4	5.2	20.7	12.0
1965-1969	0.8	0.2	6.6	7.0	5.2	11.0	6.1
1960-1964	0.5	0.2	4.2	4.4	4.5	3.3	1.8
Before 1960	2.4	1.4	14.0	7.1	24.5	10.7	9.9
IMMIGRATION STATUS, 1989	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Born in 50 States or D.C.	93.9	98.7	52.9	53.5	69.4	21.9	39.2
Born in Puerto Rico	0.5	0.1	4.2	7.0	0.5	0.1	0.6
Born in U.S. Outlying Area	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.0	2.0
Born outside U.S.	5.4	1.2	42.7	39.3	30.0	78.0	58.3
Year to U.S.:							
1985-1989	1.5	0.3	12.0	10.2	8.4	21.8	21.8
1980-1984	1.4	0.2	11.7	11.2	5.8	23.9	14.2
1975-1979	1.1	0.2	9.0	8.0	5.1	19.3	12.3
1970-1974	0.8	0.3	5.8	5.4	5.5	8.8	6.6
Before 1970	0.6	0.3	4.3	4.4	5.3	4.2	3.5

1/ Total includes some persons for whom language characteristics were not reported.
NOTE: Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November Current Population Survey, 1979 and 1989.

Table 5. Race and ethnicity, English ability, and frequency of language use of persons 5 years and over by language spoken at home: 1979 and 1989

(Totals in thousands. Distributions shown as percentage of population.)

Year and population characteristic	Total 1/	Language spoken at home: English only	Speak other languages				
			Total	Spanish	Other European	Asian or Pacific Island	All other
Total persons, 1979	200,812	176,319	17,631	8,768	6,300	1,718	845
Total persons, 1989	225,601	187,632	24,837	14,489	5,160	3,395	1,793
RACE AND ETHNICITY, 1979	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Hispanic	5.3	1.2	44.8	89.1	0.9	0.7	0.8
White,non-Hispanic	81.2	85.7	42.0	8.8	95.7	6.4	58.3
Black,non-Hispanic	11.6	12.3	2.3	1.9	3.1	0.4	4.1
Other 2/	1.9	0.8	11.0	0.2	0.3	92.6	36.7
RACE AND ETHNICITY, 1989	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Hispanic	8.4	1.9	51.4	90.1	3.4	1.3	4.9
White,non-Hispanic	76.2	83.6	30.2	8.2	87.8	4.9	56.1
Black,non-Hispanic	12.1	13.0	3.1	1.4	7.6	0.4	4.9
Other 2/	3.3	1.5	15.3	0.3	1.2	93.4	34.1
Amer. Indian/Alaska Native	0.6	0.5	0.9	0.2	0.3	0.2	10.7
Asian/Pacific Isl.	2.6	0.9	14.0	0.1	0.7	92.3	20.6
Other	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.0	0.2	0.9	2.8
ENGLISH ABILITY, 1979	--	--	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Speak English: Very well	--	--	58.2	50.7	72.0	44.9	56.2
Well	--	--	20.2	21.1	16.2	28.9	24.3
Not well	--	--	15.2	18.7	9.5	21.2	12.1
Not at all	--	--	6.3	9.5	2.3	5.0	7.5
ENGLISH ABILITY, 1989 3/	--	--	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Speak English: Very well	--	--	52.9	50.5	68.8	45.0	61.6
Well	--	--	20.9	21.0	17.9	27.3	23.0
Not well	--	--	18.4	19.7	10.7	20.1	12.9
Not at all	--	--	7.8	8.8	2.6	7.6	2.6
LANGUAGE FREQUENCY, 1989 4/							
Compared to English how often speak other language at home:	--	--	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
All the time	--	--	13.6	17.4	5.6	14.7	6.7
More often	--	--	26.1	28.4	13.6	33.2	29.2
About the same	--	--	19.5	21.0	14.1	20.8	21.6
Less than	--	--	24.5	21.7	31.5	22.6	27.3
Rarely speak it	--	--	16.3	10.8	34.2	8.2	14.8

-- Not applicable.

1/ Total includes some persons for whom language characteristics were not reported.

2/ Other includes persons of Asian/Pacific Island and persons of American Indian or Alaska Native ancestry or race.

3/ Distribution was calculated for persons whose English ability was reported.

4/ Information about frequency of language usage in the home compared to English was not collected in 1979.

NOTE: Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November Current Poplation Survey, 1979 and 1989.

Table 6. Family income of persons 5 years and over and educational attainment of persons 25 years and over by language spoken at home: 1979 and 1989

(Totals in thousands. Distributions shown as percentage of population.)

Year and population characteristic	Total 1/	Language spoken at home: English only	Speak other languages				
			Total	Spanish	Other European	Asian or Pacific Island	All other
Total persons, 1979	200,812	176,319	17,631	8,768	6,300	1,718	845
Total persons, 1989	225,601	187,632	24,837	14,489	5,160	3,395	1,793
FAMILY INCOME, 1979	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than $10,000	28.5	27.5	37.5	44.4	31.0	22.1	40.7
$10,000 to 14,999	19.5	19.0	21.6	24.1	19.1	22.2	15.8
$15,000 to 19,999	15.7	15.7	14.0	13.3	15.1	14.8	10.8
$20,000 to 24,999	14.6	15.0	11.0	8.3	13.4	15.2	13.4
$25,000 to 49,999	18.2	19.0	13.4	9.1	18.1	19.8	12.4
$50,000 and over	3.5	3.7	2.4	0.9	3.3	5.4	6.8
FAMILY INCOME, 1989	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than $20,000	37.1	34.8	50.1	56.6	44.0	35.4	51.1
$20,000 to 34,999	26.7	27.0	24.5	25.1	25.3	22.5	19.6
$35,000 to 49,999	17.1	17.7	12.5	11.0	13.4	17.8	11.6
$50,000 to 74,999	12.2	13.0	8.4	5.4	9.9	15.1	12.0
$75,000 and over	7.0	7.5	4.4	2.0	7.3	9.1	5.7
Persons 25 and over, 1979	126,455	110,189	11,901	4,879	5,056	1,175	537
Persons 25 and over, 1989	155,094	130,342	17,643	8,740	4,199	2,363	1,238
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, 197	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Did not complete high school	31.3	29.4	49.2	58.2	48.0	26.1	34.9
Completed high school	37.2	38.4	25.5	23.2	28.5	24.0	20.3
College 1 year or more	31.5	32.2	25.3	18.6	23.5	49.9	44.8
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, 198	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Did not complete high school	22.1	19.8	39.2	50.0	34.6	21.7	25.3
Completed high school	38.6	39.9	28.7	27.8	31.1	24.3	28.0
College 1 year or more	39.3	40.3	32.0	22.2	34.3	54.0	46.8

-- Not applicable.

1/ Total includes some persons for whom language characteristics were not reported.

NOTE: Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November Current Population Survey, 1979 and 1989.

speakers were reported to have immigrated to the United States in the last 5 years, compared to only about a tenth of the Spanish and "other European" language speakers. (In 1979 approximately one-third of the Asian/Pacific language speakers and "other language" speakers had immigrated in the previous 5 years).

The family income for speakers of languages other than English was significantly lower than that for persons who reported speaking only English (Table 6). This may have been in part due to differences in age distributions (school-age, prime working age, and older age) and to differences in educational attainment found between the language groups described. About one-third of the speakers of English only had family incomes below $20,000 in 1989, while about one-half of persons who reported speaking a language other than English had incomes below $20,000. There were substantial differences within the non-English language groups. These differences may have been related to such factors as family size, age distribution and educational attainment of family members. Only 35 percent of persons who spoke Asian/Pacific Island languages had family incomes of less than $20,000--similar to speakers of English only--and lower than for the other three language groups. Among Spanish speakers (a very young population), 57 percent were in families with less than $20,000 in income. The proportion of speakers of other European languages (a relatively old population with over one quarter 65 years or older) with family incomes below $20,000 was higher than for English-only speakers and Asian and Pacific Island language speakers but lower than for Spanish speakers.

Educational attainment of the total non-English speaking population was significantly lower than among the English-only population (Table 6). About 40 percent of the speakers of other languages in 1989 had not completed high school compared to approximately 20 percent of the English-only population. However, about 54 percent of Asian/Pacific Island language speakers had completed one or more years of college--compared to about 40 percent of the English-only speakers 25 years and over. Speakers of Spanish had the lowest educational attainment--50 percent had not completed high school. Comparing the 1989 survey data to those from 1979, it can be seen that for English only speakers, and speakers of Spanish and other European languages, the overall educational attainment, as measured by the proportion who had completed high school, increased. Educational attainment of the population 25 years old and over was another reflection of the great diversity of the population of speakers of languages other than English.

Speakers of Asian/Pacific languages and of Spanish were more likely to be reported to have difficulty speaking English than speakers of other European languages and of "all other languages" in 1989 (Table 5). These distributions of reported English language ability were not significantly different from what had been reported in 1979. The reporting of English ability may have reflected, in part, factors external to actual English language ability. As discussed earlier, the English ability question was subjective, asking the household respondent to report about his/her own ability and about that of other household members. English ability of persons who spoke languages other than English may have been related to such variables as intensity of exposure to English or the other language, frequency of language usage, recency of immigration, neighborhood language characteristics, and own or parental educational attainment.

In addition to perceived English ability, in 1989 persons who were speakers of languages other than English were asked to report about the relative frequency of their use of that language compared to English in their home (in 1979 this question was not asked). About 14 percent spoke the other language all the time and 59 percent spoke the language at least half of the time. Among both the Spanish speakers and the speakers of Asian and Pacific Island languages, about two-thirds spoke that language at least half of the time. About 58 percent of the speakers of "all other languages" but only about a third of speakers of other European languages spoke those languages at least half of the time at home.

Table 7 and Figure 3 contain a closer look at the relationship between language spoken, age, and reported English proficiency. Among all speakers of non-English languages, the proportion of persons with difficulty speaking English was lower among persons under 25 years old than among persons 25 years and over. The difference in reported language ability between persons under 25 and those 25 and older was greatest for speakers of Asian and Pacific Island languages.

This relationship between age and language proficiency is not surprising. Those in the youngest age groups shown were more likely to have been currently in school and thus more likely to have been exposed to English in the classroom environment. Depending upon immigration status and age of immigration, older individuals may have had little or no exposure to instruction in English language. For persons of working age, in some labor areas, because of the presence of other speakers to serve as translators when needed, there may have been little need for English language proficiency to be employed. (However, for these persons, lack of English proficiency may have served as a barrier to getting a better job.) Persons not in the labor force may have had little need for English language proficiency; they may have lived in families and in neighborhoods in which languages other than English were the dominant language.

Much of the non-English language usage in the United States appeared to be due to language transmission and maintenance over generations among persons born in the 50 States and the District of Columbia. In 1989, among persons who spoke languages other than English in the United States, just under one-half were born in the 50 States or the District of Columbia (Table 8). Among children 5 to 17 years old who spoke languages other than English at home, almost three quarters were born in the 50 States and the District of Columbia.

Reported difficulty speaking English was not limited to recent immigrants (Table 8). Among persons with reported difficulty speaking English, one-quarter were born in the 50 States or the District of Columbia. Among children 5 to 17 years old with difficulty speaking English, about three-fifths were born in the 50 States or the District of Columbia. However, persons born elsewhere (that is outside the 50 States and the District of Columbia) were more likely to have reported difficulty speaking English than persons born in the 50 States or the District of Columbia. Among speakers of languages other than English, in each age group shown in Figure 4, a higher proportion of persons born elsewhere reported difficulty speaking English than among those born in the 50 States or the District of Columbia.

Table 7. Reported English ability among persons who speak a language other than English at home by age and language spoken: 1989

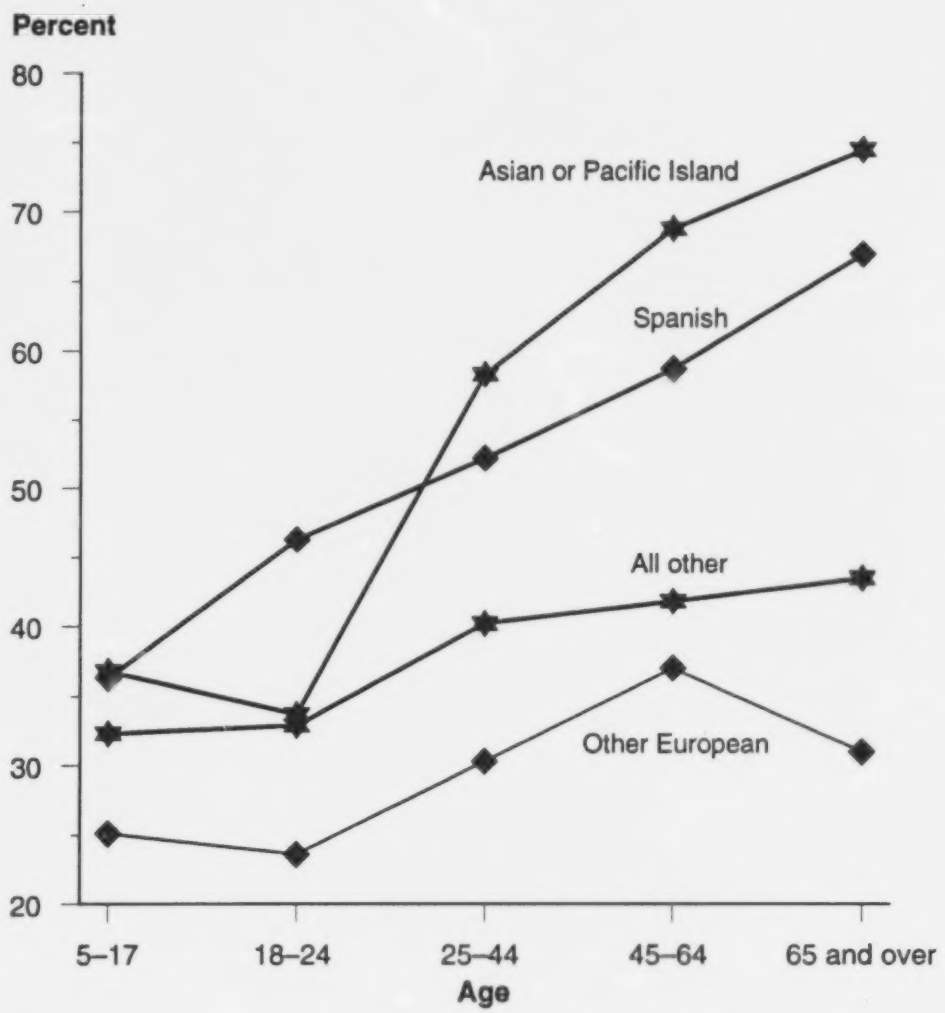
(Numbers in thousands.)

Age and ability to speak English	Total	Language spoken at home:			
		Spanish	Other European	Asian and Pacific Is.	All other
Total	24,830	14,486	5,156	3,395	1,793
With difficulty speaking English (number)	11,260	7,119	1,597	1,856	688
(Percent of speakers)	45.6	49.4	31.2	55.0	38.4
5 to 17 years	5,220	3,586	526	727	380
With difficulty speaking English (number)	1,808	1,287	131	267	123
(Percent of speakers)	34.9	36.3	25.1	36.8	32.3
18 to 24 years	3,069	2,160	430	304	175
With difficulty speaking English (number)	1,252	992	101	101	57
(Percent of speakers)	41.1	46.3	23.6	33.7	32.9
25 to 44 years	8,924	5,382	1,416	1,395	732
With difficulty speaking English (number)	4,338	2,807	427	810	294
(Percent of speakers)	48.7	52.2	30.3	58.3	40.2
45 to 64 years	4,780	2,465	1,327	657	331
With difficulty speaking English (number)	2,512	1,440	488	446	138
(Percent of speakers)	52.9	58.7	37.0	68.8	41.8
65 years and over	2,837	894	1,457	311	176
With difficulty speaking English (number)	1,350	592	450	231	76
(Percent of speakers)	47.8	67.0	31.0	74.5	43.5

NOTE: Not included in base for percentages are those persons who did not report language ability.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November Current Populati Survey, 1989.

Figure 3. Percent of persons with difficulty speaking English by age and language spoken : 1989



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November Current Population Survey, 1989.

Table 8. Age and immigration status by language spoken at home and ability to speak English for persons 5 years old and over: 1989

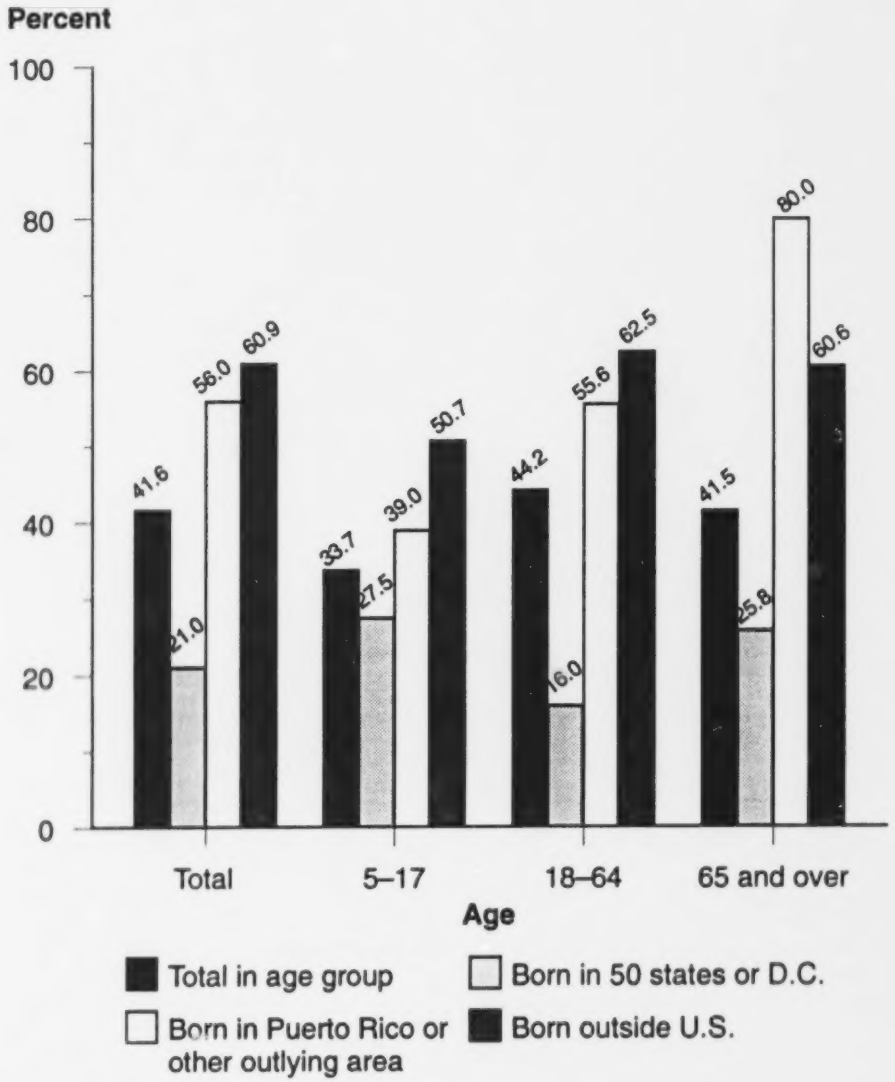
(Numbers in thousands.)

Age and immigration status	Speak a language other than English at home		
	Total	Speak English	
		Very well	With difficulty
Total	23,524	13,746	9,778
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0
Born in 50 States or D.C.	48.1	64.9	24.4
Born in Puerto Rico or other U.S. outlying area	4.1	3.1	5.5
Born outside U.S.	47.9	32.0	70.2
5 to 17 years	5,198	3,444	1,754
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0
Born in 50 States or D.C.	71.9	78.7	58.6
Born in Puerto Rico or other U.S. outlying area	2.1	1.9	2.4
Born outside U.S.	26.0	19.4	39.1
18 to 64 years	15,764	8,803	6,962
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0
Born in 50 States or D.C.	38.7	58.3	14.0
Born in Puerto Rico or other U.S. outlying area	4.8	3.8	6.1
Born outside U.S.	56.5	37.9	79.9
Year to U.S.:			
1985 to 1989	6.0	2.7	10.2
1980 to 1984	10.4	4.6	17.7
Before 1980	40.1	30.7	52.0
65 years and over	2,562	1,500	1,062
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0
Born in 50 States or D.C.	57.0	72.3	35.5
Born in Puerto Rico or other U.S. outlying area	3.5	1.2	6.8
Born outside U.S.	39.5	26.5	57.7
Year to U.S.:			
1985 to 1989	0.8	0.6	1.0
1980 to 1984	0.9	0.1	2.1
Before 1980	37.7	25.8	54.6

Note: Only persons with reported immigration status and language characteristics are included in this table.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November Current Population Survey, 1989.

Figure 4. Percent of persons 5 years and over with difficulty speaking English by birthplace and age: 1989



NOTE: Only persons with reported immigration status and language characteristics are included in this figure.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November Current Population Survey, 1989.

Non-English Language Background, English Ability, and Progress through School

Children whose first language was not English may have had more difficulty keeping up in school; they also may have been more likely to drop out of school. This section shows the relationship of language usage to progress through school. In this section, data on language usage from the November 1979 and November 1989 CPS were merged with data on school enrollment collected from the same sample of persons in October 1979 and October 1989. These data were merged to enable analysis of language usage and school enrollment characteristics. (See Appendix A for a description of the merge.)
Enrollment at the "modal" grade for a child's age was considered to be one indicator of successful progress through school. For example, in October, most 8-year-olds were enrolled in third grade; most 15-year-olds were enrolled in 10th grade. There are many factors that influence the grade in which a child was enrolled. These include parents' decision to have their child enter school late or early, parents' or teachers' decisions to retain a child in grade because of lack of emotional or developmental maturity, or because a child may have missed too much school because of absences due to migration or childhood illnesses. However, a major reason for a child to be retained in grade was because the child has not mastered the material in that grade. One reason that a child may not have mastered material was lack of proficiency in English.

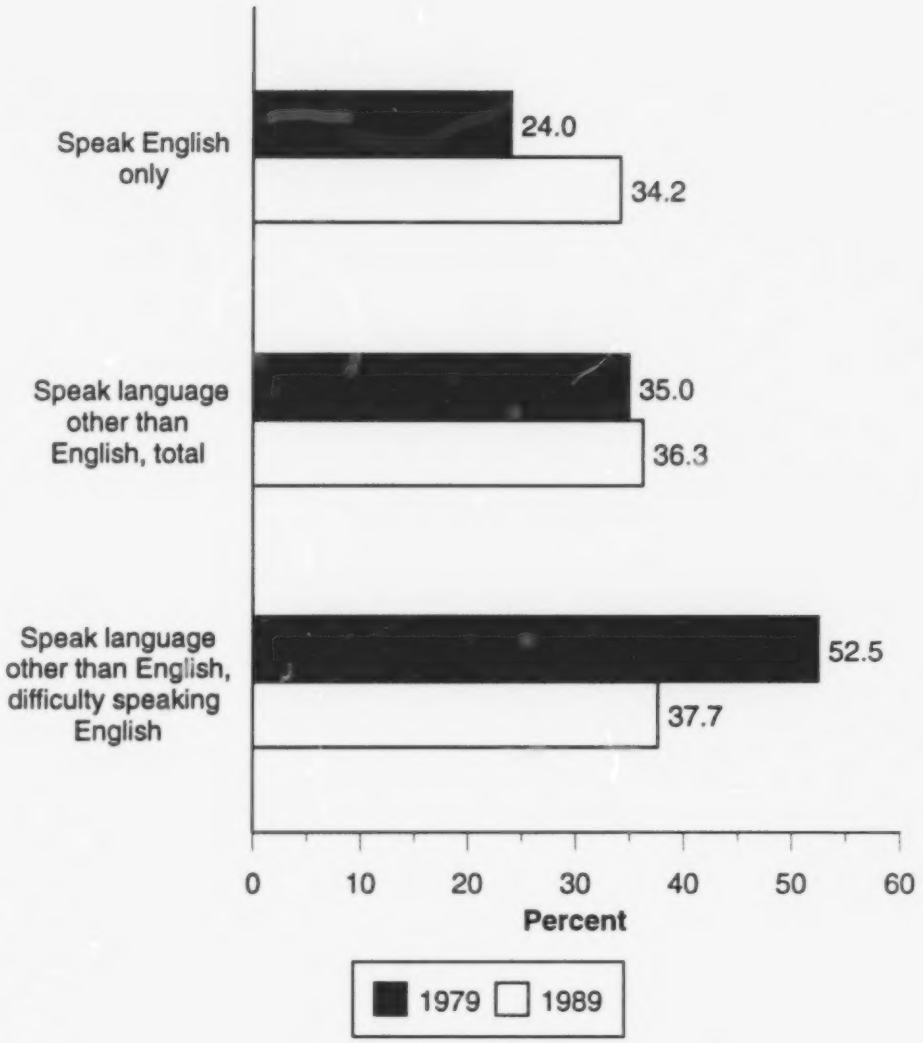
A variety of characteristics of children, including language, immigration, race/ethnicity, and parent's education, may have been related to lagging one grade or more behind their age group in school. The age group examined was children 8 to 15 years old. At this age, children were old enough to have had several years of experience in school (and to have been retained a grade) and young enough that few would have dropped out of school.

In the 10-year period between 1979-89, there was an increase in the percentage of children behind the usual grade for their age. Table 9 shows that in 1979, 25 percent of all children were enrolled below modal grade (that is, the grade in which most children of an age are enrolled in October); by 1989, this figure had increased by 10 percentage points.[9]

In 1979, among children who were reported to speak a language other than English at home, the proportion enrolled below the modal grade for their age was 11 percentage points higher (35 percent) than for English-only speakers (24 percent) (Figure 5 and Table 9). In 1989, this proportion for non-English speakers had not changed significantly (36 percent) but the proportion for English-only speakers had increased to 34 percent so that the percentage behind for the two groups was no longer significantly different. Among

[9]Some of this increase in numbers of children who appear to be behind in grade is probably due to recent changes by the States and school districts which move the month by which a child must have reached age six (for first grade) and age 5 (for kindergarten) back one or more months. For example, between 1984 and 1991, 7 states (with about 8.3 percent of elementary school enrollment) increased the minimum age of starting school by an average of 2 months which could account for about a 1.3 percentage point increase in the percentage of first grade students who are age 7 or older. Documentation for these changes may be obtained from the Education Commission of the States, Denver, Colorado.

Figure 5. Percent of children 8 to 15 years old behind modal grade for their age, by language characteristics: 1979 and 1989



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November Current Population Survey, 1979 and 1989.

Table 9. Language characteristics and progress through school for children 8 to 15 years old: 1979 and 1989
(Numbers in thousands)

Language spoken and ability to speak English	1979				1989			
	Total	Enrolled in school	Behind modal grade for their age		Total	Enrolled in school	Behind modal grade for their age	
			Number	Percent 1/			Number	Percent 1/
All children	27,170.8	26,740.6	6,649.6	24.9	25,806.8	25,572.4	8,863.0	34.7
Children with reported language information	26,482.6	26,062.6	6,494.9	24.9	24,065.4	23,850.6	8,218.8	34.5
Speak English only	24,339.0	23,984.9	5,760.6	24.0	21,050.1	20,889.7	7,143.6	34.2
Speak other language total 2/	2,143.6	2,097.7	734.3	35.0	3,015.3	2,960.9	1,075.2	36.3
Language spoken:								
Spanish	1,444.1	1,413.7	557.0	39.4	1,942.6	1,895.5	755.9	39.9
All other European languages, total	435.1	430.4	87.6	20.3	280.1	277.6	74.1	26.7
Asian and Pacific Island languages, total	165.4	155.9	51.8	33.2	433.0	428.9	120.0	28.0
All other languages	73.2	65.8	30.3	(B)	222.1	222.1	78.2	35.2
With difficulty speaking English, total 3/	575.3	554.9	291.3	52.5	847.7	829.7	313.0	37.7
Language spoken:								
Spanish	455.7	441.8	230.1	52.1	591.1	575.6	242.3	42.1
All other European languages, total	33.0	33.0	11.5	(B)	75.5	73.0	18.9	(B)
Asian and Pacific Island languages, total	61.7	60.7	32.9	(B)	118.2	118.2	38.8	32.8
All other languages	24.9	19.4	16.8	(B)	62.9	62.9	13.0	(B)
Children with no reported language information	688.2	678.0	154.6	22.8	1,741.4	1,721.8	644.2	37.4

1/ Percent of total enrolled in school.
2/ This total includes some children for whom a specific language was not reported.
3/ Persons who were tabulated under "with difficulty speaking English" reported speaking English less than "Very well."
(B) The base of the derived figure is less than 75,000.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, October and November Current Population Survey, 1979 and 1989.

the non-English language speakers in 1989, about 40 percent of speakers of Spanish were behind in school, which was significantly higher than speakers of Asian and Pacific Island languages (28 percent)(Table 9).

Between 1979 and 1989, among children reported to have difficulty speaking English, there was a 15 percentage point drop in the proportion who were behind the modal grade for their age. In 1989, the percentage below modal grade among those persons who were reported to have difficulty speaking English was not significantly different from the percentage below modal grade from English-only homes (which had increased 10 percentage points between 1979 and 1989).

Thus, while in 1979, speaking a language other than English at home and reporting English-speaking difficulty were clearly related to a higher risk of being below modal grade for age, in 1989 these relationships appeared no longer to hold. At this time it remains unclear what combination of factors might have contributed to the increase in English-only students behind in grade at the same time as the percent behind in grade of students with difficulty speaking English decreased. Among possible hypotheses are:

1) An increase in parents delaying their child's school entry which may have been adopted by English-only parents more than by parents who speak languages other than English;

2) Changes in school policies or programs for children with difficulty speaking English; and

3) Differences in State (and local) policies relative to school entry and promotion in States (and localities) with high concentrations of language minority students and those that do not.

To find out more about the changes in the relationship between language usage and progress through school, the remainder of this section looks at language, race/ethnicity, place of birth, and parent's education.

The elimination over the last 10 years of differences in school retention rates between English-only speakers and speakers of other languages was not due to changes in the racial composition of the two groups (see Table 10). Without controlling for language spoken, for whites and blacks there was an increase in the proportion behind in school between 1979 and 1989. Among the race group labeled "other" (which included Asians and Pacific Islanders as well as American Indians), the proportion behind in school did not change; for Hispanics, the change was not significant. Among children who were reported to speak a language other than English, the proportion behind in school stayed about the same between 1979 and 1989 for the total, white, and Hispanic children. In contrast, the proportion behind in school among those children reported to speak only English increased for the total group and for whites and blacks. In 1989, for whites, children who spoke a language other than English at home were less likely to be behind in school than those who spoke only English.

Table 10. Race/ethnicity, language spoken at home and progress through school of 8- to 15-year-olds: 1979 and 1989

(Numbers in thousands)

Year, language and grade	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Other
1979					
Enrolled in school*	26,741	20,611	3,857	1,783	490
Below modal grade (%)	24.9	22.4	32.4	35.5	30.0
Speak only English at home	23,965	19,540	3,677	474	274
Below modal grade (%)	24.0	22.3	32.8	27.0	22.8
Speak other language at home	2,098	619	53	1,238	188
Below modal grade (%)	35.0	25.0	(B)	39.4	43.1
1989					
Enrolled in school*	25,572	18,028	3,884	2,668	992
Below modal grade (%)	34.7	32.6	41.0	41.4	29.9
Speak only English at home	20,890	16,191	3,503	762	434
Below modal grade (%)	34.2	32.6	41.2	38.6	27.7
Speak other language at home	2,961	615	88	1,768	489
Below modal grade (%)	36.3	23.9	36.6	42.1	31.0

(B) The base of the derived figure is less than 75,000.

* Children for whom no language characteristics were reported are included in the totals but not shown separately.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November Current Population Survey, 1979 and 1989.

Table 11: Progress through school, language spoken at home, place of birth birth by ethnicity of 8 to 15 year olds enrolled in school: 1979 and 1989 in school: 1979 and 1989 (Numbers in thousands)

Year, ethnicity, place of birth, and below modal grade	Total	Language spoken at home: Speak only English	Language spoken at home: Speak other
1979			
Hispanic*	1,783	474	1,238
% below modal grade	35.5	27.0	39.4
Born in 50 States and D.C.	1,365	455	910
% below modal grade	31.8	25.5	34.9
Born elsewhere	347	19	328
% below modal grade	52.4	(B)	51.8
Nonhispanic*	24,958	23,491	860
% below modal grade	24.1	23.9	28.6
Born in 50 States and D.C.	23,753	23,184	569
% below modal grade	24.0	24.0	22.3
Born elsewhere	597	306	290
% below modal grade	31.1	21.5	41.3
1989			
Hispanic*	2,668	762	1,768
% below modal grade	41.4	38.6	42.1
Born in 50 States and D.C.	2,075	744	1,331
% below modal grade	40.1	39.1	40.7
Born elsewhere	396	14	381
% below modal grade	44.4	(B)	45.3
Nonhispanic*	22,904	20,128	1,192
% below modal grade	33.9	34.0	27.8
Born in 50 States and D.C.	20,598	19,784	813
% below modal grade	33.6	33.9	26.4
Born elsewhere	554	195	359
% below modal grade	36.1	43.9	31.8

* Totals for Hispanics and Nonhispanics include some children whose country of birth and/or language was not reported.

NOTE: Born elsewhere includes Puerto Rico, the other U.S. Outlying Areas, and all other countries.

(B) Base is less than 75,000.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. October and November Current Population Survey, 1979 and 1989.

Table 11 shows place of birth, language spoken, and progress through school for Hispanics and non-Hispanics in 1979 and 1989. In 1979, among Hispanics and non-Hispanics who spoke a language other than English, those born elsewhere (Puerto Rico, the Outlying Areas or in a foreign country) were more likely to be behind in school than those born in the 50 States or D.C. Among non-Hispanics, speaking a language other than English made no difference as long as the child was born in the 50 States or the District of Columbia (around 22 to 24 percent were behind in school). However, for non-Hispanic children born elsewhere, those who spoke a language other than English at home were much more likely to be behind in school (41 percent behind in school), than were those who spoke only English at home (22 percent behind in school).

By 1989, the relationships between language spoken and place of birth with progress through school had largely disappeared. Both Hispanics and non-Hispanics who were born elsewhere and who spoke a language other than English at home were no more likely to be behind in school than those born in the fifty States or the District of Columbia who spoke only English at home. Among non-Hispanics born in the 50 States or the District of Columbia, children were less likely to be behind in school if they spoke a language other than English at home than if they spoke only English at home.

Children who spoke Spanish at home were much more likely to have had a parent with low educational attainment than were children from other language backgrounds. For example, over one-half of all Spanish-speaking children's parents did not complete high school (Table 12). Among children who spoke other non-English languages at home, about one-third of the other European speakers and of the "other language" speakers and one-fifth of the Asian/Pacific Island language speakers had a parent who had not completed high school.

In 1989, there was more difference in percentage behind in school between children whose parents completed different amounts of education than was found between the language groups. Table 12 shows that across the language groups the pattern by parent's educational attainment was similar. Overall, children whose parent completed 1 or more years of college were over one third less likely to be behind in school than those children whose parent completed 1 to 3 years of high school (29 percent compared to 46 percent behind in school respectively).

Non-English Language Background, English Ability, and Schooling

High school completion was considered to be an important predictor of future education and economic outcomes. For persons who spoke a language other than English at home, progress through school may have been more difficult than for persons who spoke only English. This section describes the relationship between language spoken, English ability, place of birth, parent's educational attainment and the schooling of persons 16 to 24 years old.

In focusing on those variables, this discussion leaves out other important personal and institutional characteristics which also impact upon a person's educational attainment such as age, sex, race, and family income (see U.S. Department of Commerce, 1993). In

Table 12: Progress through school of 8- to 15-year-olds enrolled in school by language spoken at home and parent's education: 1989

(Numbers in thousands)

Language spoken at home and percent below modal grade	Total children	Parent's educational attainment					No parent in household
		Less than 5 years	5 to 8 years	9 to 11 years	Completed high school	College 1 or more years	
All children 1/	25,571	449	1,505	2,782	9,507	10,204	1,122
Percent of total	100.0	1.8	5.9	10.9	37.2	39.9	4.4
Percent below modal grade	34.7	45.5	54.2	45.7	33.3	28.6	42.7
Speak only English at home	20,890	75	753	2,285	8,010	8,815	951
Percent of total	100.0	0.4	3.6	10.9	38.3	42.2	4.6
Percent below modal grade	34.2	48.5	58.7	46.2	33.5	28.5	43.3
Speak other language at home 2/	2,961	337	649	314	810	721	129
Percent of total	100.0	11.4	21.9	10.6	27.4	24.4	4.4
Percent below modal grade	36.4	44.9	46.8	40.6	32.4	25.4	37.1
Spanish	1,896	249	495	258	516	295	82
Percent of total	100.0	13.2	26.1	13.6	27.2	15.6	4.4
Percent below modal grade	39.9	50.4	47.7	45.3	31.9	27.6	46.0
Other European language	278	21	46	19	104	74	13
Percent of total	100.0	7.4	16.5	6.9	37.4	26.8	4.6
Percent below model grade	26.7	(B)	(B)	(B)	15.5	(B)	(B)
Asian/Pacific Island language	429	46	33	6	107	213	24
Percent of total	100.0	10.6	7.6	1.4	24.9	49.8	5.7
Percent below modal grade	28.0	(B)	(B)	(B)	41.8	20.8	(B)
All other languages	222	6	46	16	47	104	3
Percent of total	100.0	2.8	20.5	7.2	20.9	47.0	1.5
Percent below modal grade	35.2	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	25.7	(B)

(B) Base is less than 75,000

1/ Totals include some children whose language was not reported.

2/ Includes some children for whom specific language was not reported.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, October and November Current Population Survey, 1979 and 1989.

Table 13. Enrollment status of 16- to 24-year-olds by language spoken at home: 1989
(Numbers in thousand

Enrollment status	Total*	Speak only English	Speak other language at home				
			Total	Spanish	Other European	Asian or Pacific Island	All other
Total	31,923	26,116	4,213	2,751	530	413	215
Percent enrolled in college	23.7	24.6	18.1	12.9	28.7	33.4	27.7
Percent not enrolled and completed high school	40.4	41.7	32.6	32.1	37.4	22.5	34.3
Percent enrolled below college	23.5	23.2	24.8	23.8	23.0	35.4	22.0
Percent not enrolled and not completed high school	12.5	10.5	24.5	31.3	10.8	8.8	16.3

* Includes some persons for whom language characteristics were not reported.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November Current Population Survey, 1989.

terms of current educational attainment, persons in this age group may be enrolled in high school, be enrolled in college, have completed high school and not be currently enrolled in school (some of these persons may have completed some postsecondary schooling), or have dropped out of school prior to completing high school.

In the total population of persons 16 to 24 years old in 1989, 40 percent had completed high school and were not currently enrolled in school; about 24 percent each were enrolled in high school or enrolled in college; and 13 percent had not completed high school and were not enrolled (Table 13). Persons who spoke a language other than English were more than twice as likely to have dropped out prior to completing high school than persons who spoke only English at home (among new immigrants, some may never have attended school in the United States). The percent enrolled in high school was similar for English-only and non-English speakers, but non-English speakers were less likely than English-only speakers to be enrolled in college or to have completed high school and not be currently enrolled.

Looking across the four non-English language groups and the English-only group, significant differences in enrollment status can be seen in the percent not enrolled who did not complete high school (see Table 13). Persons 16 to 24 years old who were Spanish speakers had higher dropout rates compared to English-only speakers and speakers of other European languages, and Asian and Pacific Island languages. Speakers of other European and "All Other" languages have enrollment statuses similar to the English-only speakers. Asian or Pacific Island language speakers were more likely to be enrolled in school (high school and college combined) than Spanish speakers or English-only speakers.

English language proficiency appears to be related to enrollment status of persons 16 to 24 years old who spoke languages other than English at home (Table 14 and Figure 6). Persons who reported difficulty speaking English were less likely than those who reported speaking English very well to be currently attending college (9 percent compared to 24 percent respectively). They were also more likely to not be currently enrolled and not have completed high school (42 percent compared to 14 percent respectively). Regardless of whether the language spoken is Spanish or all other languages (combining "Other European", "Asian or Pacific Island", and "All Other" languages), the relationship between difficulty speaking English and enrollment status holds.

Spanish speakers may be at greater risk of failing to complete high school because a higher percent of them were reported to have difficulty speaking English (1.2 million of 2.8 million or 43 percent) than among speakers of all the other languages (0.3 million of 1.2 million or 27 percent). However, even controlling for reported language ability, there is significant disparity between Spanish and all other language groups. Controlling for language ability, Spanish speakers were over twice as likely to not be currently enrolled and not have completed high school than were speakers of the other languages. College enrollment of Spanish speakers who spoke English very well is similar to that of speakers of all the other languages who reported difficulty speaking English.

Place of birth and recency of immigration appear also to be related to educational attainment for speakers of Spanish. Spanish speakers who were born outside the United States were over twice as likely to have not completed high school than persons who

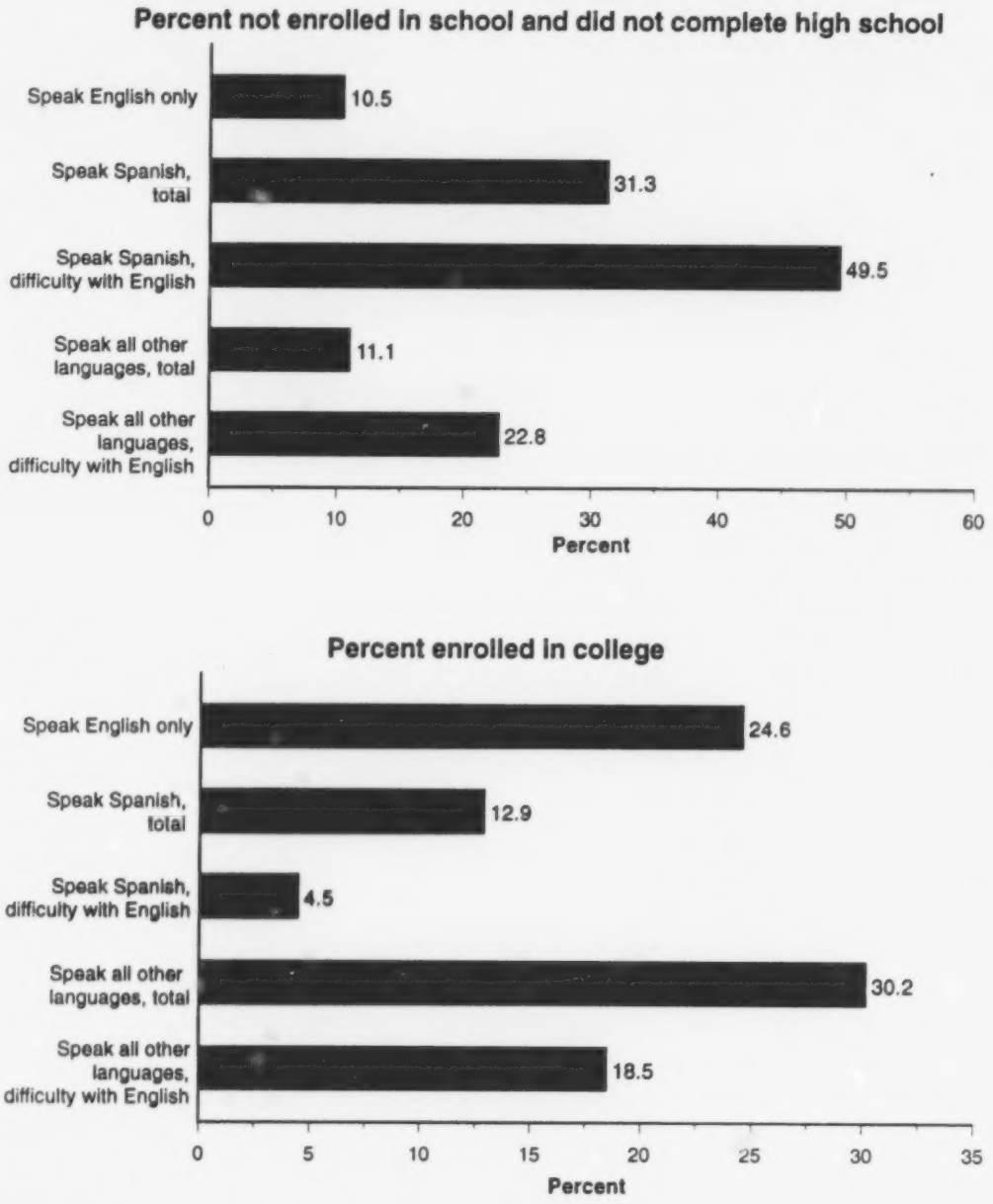
Table 14. Enrollment status of 16- to 24-year-olds by language spoken at home and English ability: 1989
(Numbers in thousands)

Enrollment status	Speak only English	Speak language other than English at home								
		All languages			Spanish			All other languages		
		Total 1/	Speak English		Total 1/	Speak English		Total 1/	Speak English	
			Very well	With difficulty 2/		Very well	With difficulty 2/		Very well	With difficulty 2/
Total	26,116	3,909	2,374	1,493	2,751	1,543	1,175	1,158	831	318
Percent enrolled in college	24.6	18.0	24.1	8.6	12.9	19.5	4.5	30.2	34.9	18.5
Percent not enrolled and completed high school	41.7	31.9	33.5	29.9	32.1	34.3	29.3	31.5	31.5	31.3
Percent enrolled below college	23.2	24.8	28.2	19.8	23.8	28.8	16.6	27.2	26.9	27.3
Percent not enrolled and not completed high school	10.5	25.3	14.3	41.6	31.3	17.5	49.5	11.1	6.8	22.8

1/ Total includes some persons for whom language ability was not reported.
2/ Persons tabulated under "with difficulty" were reported to speak English less than "Very well."

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November Current Population Survey, 1989.

Figure 6. Percentage of 16 to 24 year olds, by enrollment and language characteristics: 1989



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November Current Population Survey, 1989.

Table 15. Enrollment status of 16- to 24-year-olds who speak a language other than English at home by language spoken and immigration status: 1989
(Numbers in thousands)

Language spoken and enrollment status	Total*	Place of birth:				
		50 States or D.C.	Foreign born			
			Total	Year of immigration:		
				1985-89	1980-84	Before 1980
All languages	3,909	1,923	1,754	729	497	529
Percent enrolled in college	18.0	21.5	15.2	10.4	12.9	23.9
Percent not enrolled and completed high school	31.9	32.4	31.8	31.8	29.5	34.0
Percent enrolled below college	24.8	29.1	20.5	16.9	23.5	22.6
Percent not enrolled and not completed high school	25.3	17.0	32.5	40.8	34.1	19.4
Spanish	2,751	1,388	1,178	525	328	325
Percent enrolled in college	12.9	17.1	8.9	5.4	4.7	18.9
Percent not enrolled and completed high school	32.1	32.8	31.5	31.0	30.8	32.8
Percent enrolled below college	23.8	30.3	17.2	14.7	16.0	22.4
Percent not enrolled and not completed high school	31.3	19.8	42.4	48.8	48.5	26.0
All other languages	1,158	535	576	204	169	203
Percent enrolled in college	30.2	32.9	28.0	23.4	28.9	32.0
Percent not enrolled and completed high school	31.5	31.4	32.6	33.7	26.9	36.1
Percent enrolled below college	27.2	26.0	27.3	22.7	38.1	23.1
Percent not enrolled and not completed high school	11.1	9.7	12.1	20.2	6.2	8.9

* The total includes persons born in Puerto Rico or the other U.S. Outlying Areas as well as persons who did not report place of birth. These persons are not shown separately.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November Current Population Survey, 1989.

Table 16. Enrollment status of 16- to 24-year-olds by language spoken at home, parent's education: 1989

Language spoken, presence of parent and parent's education	Total number	Percent			
		Enrolled in college	Not enrolled completed high school	Enrolled below college	Not enrolled and not completed high school
Total *	31,923	23.7	40.3	23.5	12.5
Less than 5 years	435	11.4	32.4	30.8	25.3
5 to 8 years	1,607	15.7	31.7	30.7	21.9
9 to 11 years	2,319	11.9	35.0	37.1	16.0
Completed high school	7,481	24.3	32.6	35.3	7.8
College 1 or more years	7,941	40.5	20.8	35.9	2.8
No parent in household	12,140	16.0	60.3	4.3	19.4
Speak English only	26,120	24.6	41.7	23.2	10.5
Less than 5 years	171	12.3	35.1	26.7	25.6
5 to 8 years	980	14.8	34.4	28.1	22.5
9 to 11 years	1,931	11.7	36.0	36.9	15.1
Completed high school	6,487	24.4	33.3	34.7	7.6
College 1 or more years	6,821	40.7	21.4	35.3	2.7
No parent in household	9,731	17.2	63.4	3.8	15.6
Speak Spanish	2,751	12.9	32.1	23.8	31.3
Less than 5 years	224	9.2	31.0	32.3	27.5
5 to 8 years	420	18.8	24.4	36.6	20.2
9 to 11 years	191	7.9	29.6	40.2	22.3
Completed high school	324	23.5	25.4	39.9	11.1
College 1 or more years	293	34.3	17.7	45.2	2.7
No parent in household	1,299	4.8	40.0	7.0	48.3
Speak other language	1,158	30.2	31.5	27.2	11.1
Less than 5 years	28	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)
5 to 8 years	136	14.4	34.2	32.2	19.1
9 to 11 years	57	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)
Completed high school	199	27.7	23.7	43.6	5.0
College 1 or more years	333	45.0	13.0	39.2	2.9
No parent in household	405	23.9	51.6	6.3	18.2

* Total includes some persons for whom language characteristics were not reported.
(B) Base is less than 75,000 population.
NOTE: Parent's education is not known for persons not living in the same household as their parent. These persons are shown separately.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November Current Population Survey, 1989.

were born in the 50 States and the District of Columbia (Table 15). Among foreign born speakers of Spanish, only those who had immigrated before 1980 had similar dropout rates to those born in the States. Among foreign born speakers of the other non-English languages, the proportion of persons who had not completed high school and were not enrolled was similar to those born in the United States.

Controlling for parent's education significantly reduced the educational attainment differences between the language groups.[10] For example, before level of parent's education is controlled, the current college enrollment rate of English-only speakers was twice that of Spanish speakers. Also, without controlling for parent's education, Spanish speakers were three times as likely to have not completed high school and not be currently enrolled as English speakers. However, when parent's education level is similar, there are no significant differences remaining between the speakers of English-only and the Spanish speakers (see Table 16). There was a large difference among young adults who do not live with a parent, among the English speakers, 16 percent were not enrolled and had not completed high school; among Spanish speakers, almost half were not enrolled and had not completed high school.

Summary

Not only did the number of persons 5 years and older who spoke a language other than English increase by 41 percent over the 10-year period between 1979 and 1989, but the distribution of those speakers among language groups also changed substantially. For example, over the 10-year period, the number of Spanish speakers increased by 65 percent, and the number of speakers of the Asian and Pacific Island languages almost doubled. The numbers of speakers of other European languages, such as German and Italian, which, although they continue to be major languages in the United States, actually declined between 1979 and 1989.

Among persons who reported speaking a language other than English at home, 47 percent reported difficulty speaking English (that is their English ability was reported to be less than "Very well"). However, the proportion reporting difficulty speaking English was higher for those 25 and older and for speakers of Spanish and Asian and Pacific Island languages.

In 1979, children 8 to 15 years old who reported speaking a language other than English at home were more likely to be behind in school than were persons who spoke only English at home. By 1989, this difference had disappeared; while children who spoke languages other than English were about as likely to be behind modal grade as they were

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[10] The CPS collected information about educational attainment from all residents of a household. When a parent was not a household member, the CPS did not collect information about the parent's educational attainment. About 63 percent of English speaking persons 16 to 24 years old live with one or both of their parents. Among persons who speak Spanish, 53 percent live with one or both of their parents (table 13). Among those who spoke other languages about 66 percent lived with one or both parents (this proportion is not significantly different from that of the English-only speakers). Persons who live with neither parent may still be living with their family--grandparents, aunts or uncles, or siblings, for example.

in 1979, children who spoke only English at home were 40 percent more likely to be behind in school. Also, between 1979 and 1989 the proportion of children with difficulty speaking English who were behind in school dropped 15 percentage points to about the level of the English-only speakers and the level of speakers of other languages as a whole.

While language spoken at home and English ability appeared to be related to enrollment status of 16- to 24-year-olds, other factors help account for the relationship between language and educational outcomes. These factors include place of birth, period of immigration, and parental education. When comparisons of language spoken can be made among persons with similar levels of parental education, the enrollment status of individuals with similar parental education levels but who differ in language spoken at home tend to be similar.

APPENDIX A. DATA SOURCES AND DEFINITIONS.

The information presented in this report is based on the Census Bureau's monthly survey, the Current Population Survey (CPS). The monthly CPS collects mainly labor force data for the civilian noninstitutional population. Unlike the decennial census which is largely a mail-out/mail-back data collection, the CPS is conducted by personal interview, either in person or over the telephone, of a household member who is 18 years old or older. This person is designated the household respondent. In this report the figures are based upon information collected in the November 1979 and November 1989 surveys which included a supplement which focused on language usage, ethnicity, and immigration questions. In addition, for part of the analysis, a linkage was made to the October 1979 and October 1989 CPS surveys which collected information about school enrollment.

In 1979 the CPS sample was located in 614 areas comprising 1,113 counties, independent cities, and minor civil divisions in the Nation, and approximately 56,500 occupied households were eligible for interview. The 1979 sample was initially selected from the 1970 census file which was updated continuously to reflect new housing construction. In 1989, the CPS covered 729 sample areas consisting of 1,973 counties, independent cities, and minor civil divisions throughout the 50 states and the District of Columbia and 60,000 households were included in the sample. The 1989 sample was selected from 1980 census files and was also periodically updated to reflect new housing construction.

In addition to the CPS data in this report, some data are included for reference purposes from the 1980 and 1990 decennial censuses. The same basic questions on language usage were used in the CPS and the "long form" of the censuses. The "long form" questionnaire went to 17.7 million housing units (or approximately 17 percent of the housing units in the United States).

Definitions

Questions from the November Current Population Survey.

Current language. For each household member 5 years old and over, the household respondent was asked whether the person currently spoke a language other than English at home. Persons able to speak a language other than English but who did not do so at home were reported as speaking English only. The household respondent was asked to report what language each non-English speaker spoke and these specific responses were recorded. The question about current language was identical in the 1979 and 1989 CPS and in the 1980 and 1990 decennial censuses.

Ability to speak English. For each person 5 years and over who was reported as speaking a language other than English at home, the household respondent was asked, "How well does this person speak English -- very well, well, not well, or not at all?" Minor wording

differences distinguished the 1979 CPS question on English ability from the question used in the 1989 CPS and the 1980 and 1990 census.[11]

Frequency of language use. For persons who were reported to speak a language other than English at home, the household respondent was asked, "Compared to English, how often does this persons speak (the non-English language reported) -- all the time, no English; more often than English; about the same as English; less often than English; or rarely speaks (the non-English langauge reported)?" This question was asked only on the 1989 CPS.

Place of birth. In the 1979 and 1989 CPS, each household member's birthplace was ascertained with the question, "In what country was this person born?" Detailed responses were recorded.

Year of immigration. For persons who were not born in the United States, Puerto Rico or the outlying areas of the United States, the question, "When did this person come to the United States to stay?" was asked.

Information collected in each month of the Current Population Survey.

Family income. The information on family income is derived from a single question asked of the household respondent when a household first enters the sample, which is updated one year after entry into the sample. Income includes money income from jobs; net income from business, farm or rent; pensions; dividends; interest; social security payments; and any other money income. The income of nonrelatives living in the household is excluded. The family income statistics refer to income over a 12-month period starting 12 to 16 months prior to the interview.

Parent's education. For each person in a household the CPS lists a parent if that person's parent is a household member. If more than one parent is a household member, the CPS interviewer is instructed to list the first one appearing on the household roster, whether or not that person is a stepparent; most often this is a male. Parent's education is derived by associating the educational attainment of the identified parent with the child's record.

Race and ethnicity. This is a combination of two questions, one on race (white, black, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian or Pacific Islander) and one on Hispanic origin. For the purpose of this report, American Indians or Alaska Natives and Asians or Pacific Islanders were identified first, then persons who were Hispanic, and finally, white non-Hispanics and black non-Hispanics.

Educational attainment. The information about years of school completed is derived from answers to two questions: "What is the highest grade of school he/she has ever

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[11] The November 1979 CPS English ability question was, "Does this person speak English-- very well, well, not well, or not at all?"

attended?" and "Did he/she finish this grade?" This information is collected during the first interview and updated as necessary.

Not enrolled and not completed high school. Some of the tables in this report show persons who are 16 to 24 years old. It is important to note that persons who fall into this category were not currently enrolled and had stopped attending school at some point prior to high school completion. Thus it includes persons who may have completed less than 8 years of school as well as those who attended school into the 12th grade but dropped out prior to completing that grade.

Information collected in the October Current Population Survey.

School enrollment. Each October, the CPS includes questions on the enrollment status of the population 3 years old and over. They are based on a reply to the interviewer's question whether the person was enrolled in regular school. Interviewers were instructed to count as enrolled anyone who had been enrolled at any time during the current term of school year in any type of public, parochial, or other private school in the regular school system. Such schools include nursery schools, kindergartens, elementary schools, high schools, colleges, universities, and professional schools. For persons enrolled in regular school, interviewers ascertain the level of school and year or grade of school in which they are enrolled.

Modal grade. The modal grade is the year of school in which the largest proportion of students of a given age is enrolled. Enrolled persons are classified according to their relative progress in school, which is determined using a combination of two variables, person's age and grade of enrollment. The grade in which a person is enrolled is described as being below, at, or above the modal or typical grade for persons of their age at the time of the survey.

Modal grade and language usage. One of the major questions examined in this report was whether children who speak languages other than English or children who have difficulty speaking English are more likely to be behind in school than children who speak only English at home. In order to examine this question, the information about school enrollment contained in the October CPS had to be merged with that contained in the November 1979 and November 1989 CPS. Three quarters of the sample for the Current Population Survey was interviewed in the two consecutive months of October and November 1979 and 1989 respectively. A successful match was achieved for over 90 percent of the overlapping sample (keying the match on person's age, sex, and race within a matched household). The matched sample was weighted to a national estimate by multiplying the monthly weights by a factor of 1.334 (a factor that adjusts the sample weights so that the weighted estimate of three quarters of the sample equals the weighted estimate of the total sample). This resulted in an estimate of the merged sample of children 8 to 15 years old that was about 93 percent of the estimate from the full individual monthly samples.

APPENDIX B. ALTERNATE MEASURES OF NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGE USAGE AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Although the data presented in this report are derived from the November 1979 and November 1989 Current Population Survey (CPS), there are several potential alternate data sources. Most important among them is the 1990 decennial census of population. Data from the census are currently beginning to be released. The census will report language information for the entire population (i.e., imputation for nonresponse is performed). The decennial census data will be useful to analyze characteristics of the population in small geographic areas and for relatively rarely reported languages. Unfortunately the census did not collect information about individual years of school completed in the elementary grades.

The November 1979 Current Population Survey (CPS), the April 1980 Census, the November 1989 CPS and the April 1990 Census all used the same series of three questions about language usage. The 1979 and 1989 CPS numbers of persons who were reported to speak a language other than English at home are significantly lower (22 to 24 percent) than those reported in the following Censuses.

Table B-1. Estimates of persons age 5 and over who speak a languages other than English at home

YEAR	CURRENT POPULATION SURVEY		CENSUS	
	Number	Percent of the US Population	Number	Percent of the US Population
1979/80	17.6million	9.0	23.1million	11.0
1989/90	24.8 million	12.0	31.8 million	13.8

Several reasons for this difference are plausible:

- The decennial census data were fully edited and allocated. Thus all persons who failed to report on language usage were allocated language characteristics based upon other reported household or personal characteristics. The CPS data were not fully allocated, and this report uses only those persons for whom language usage was actually reported.

- The 1979 CPS sample was drawn based upon the 1970 census population distribution and the 1989 CPS sample was drawn based upon the 1980 census population distribution (both updated by information about new housing construction in the intervening years). Given this relatively "old" sample frame, the 1979 and 1989 CPS may not have been able to reflect the population of new immigrants as accurately as it could the non-recent-immigrant population.

▸ Differences in data collection methodology. The CPS data were collected by interviewers who may have been able to explain the intent of the language questions, e.g., frequent use of a language rather than knowledge of a few words or a language learned in school only. The decennial census data were collected through the mail-out/mail-back system, and counts may have been inflated by some persons reporting non-English language usage which was only incidental. The numbers of non-English speakers derived from the 1979 CPS and the 1989 CPS probably underestimate the size of the non-English speaking population because some proportion of those persons for whom language usage was not reported were non-English language speakers. These people may well have been hard to contact because of their limited English proficiency.

Thus probably the "true number" of persons who speak languages other than English at home is somewhere between the CPS and census estimates; in 1979/80, between 18 and 23 million and in 1989, between 25 and 32 million.

Among non-English language speakers, the distribution of language abilities reported in the 1980 and the 1990 Census was not significantly different from that reported in the 1979 CPS or the 1989 CPS. (In the 1990 census, 56 percent reported speaking English very well; 23 well, 15 not well and 5 not at all). Thus in 1979/80, the population reporting difficulty speaking English, using the cutoff of persons who were reported to speak English less than very well, had a range of between 7.4 million (CPS) and 10.2 million (Census) persons; in 1989/90, we can estimate that the range was between 11.7 million (CPS) and 13.9 million (Census) persons reporting difficulty speaking English.

The Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs collects and reports State estimates of language characteristics of the U.S. student population which are contained in an annual report, The Condition of Bilingual Education in the Nation. These numbers are reported by States participating in the State grant program. States reported 1.9 million limited English proficient students in the school year 1989-90. State estimates reflect the methods which are unique to each state involving individual testing, teacher determinations, etc. Thus, unless carefully qualified, numbers of students in one state who were identified using one method should not be compared to the numbers of students in another state identified using another method. Recently, the Council of Chief State School Officers recommended that the states try to develop methods of identifying and assessing these students that are comparable across the states.[12]

Also reported in the Condition of Bilingual Education are projections to 1986 based upon the 1982 English Language Proficiency Survey. The 1982 estimates were of the number of children aged 5 to 17 in language minority households, who made substantial use of a language other than English, and who scored at or below the twentieth percentile on the measure of English language. These estimates were projected to 1986 by using estimates of population growth and immigration rates in the interim. Using this methodology, they projected that in 1986 there were between 1.2 million and 1.7 million 5- to 17-year-old

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[12] Council of Chief State School Officers, Recommendations for Improving the Assessment and Monitoring of Students with Limited English Proficiency, Washington, D.C. 1992.

children who would be considered limited English proficient.[13] However, the projections should be used with caution because they update estimates for a population which over the past ten years has been rapidly growing and also rapidly changing in its characteristics (e.g., countries of origin, educational attainment, occupational characteristics).

[13] U.S. Department of Education, The Condition of Bilingual Education in the Nation: A Report to the Congress and the President, June 30, 1991.

APPENDIX C. ACCURACY OF ESTIMATES AND STATISTICAL PROCEDURES

The estimates in this report are derived from sample data and are subject to both sampling and nonsampling errors. Sampling errors occur because the data are collected from a sample of the population, rather than the entire population. Estimates based on a sample differ somewhat from the values that would result from a universe survey using the same instruments, instructions, and procedures. Standard errors are a measure of the variability due to using data from a sample to estimate values for a universe. They indicate the extent of possible variation in the estimates of a specific parameter given the sample size. They can be used as a measure of the precision expected from a particular sample. The probability that an estimate based on a complete census would differ from a sample parameter by less than the standard error is about 68 out of 100. The chances that the difference would be less than 1.65 times the standard error are about 90 out of 100 and less than 1.96 times the standard error about 95 out of 100.

Standard errors for numbers based on the CPS in this report can be calculated using the following formula:

$$s.e. = \sqrt{-(b/T)(x^2) + bx}$$

where x is the size of the estimate
T is the total number of persons in a specific age group
b is the parameter 2,532 for total and English-only persons and 5,772 for non-English speakers. NOTE that for 1979 the b parameter should be multiplied by 0.68.

Standard errors for numbers based on the decennial census long form data can be calculated using the following formula:

$$s.e. = b\sqrt{5x(1 - x/T)}$$

where x is the size of the estimate
T is the total number of persons in a specific age group
b is the standard error adjustment factor 1.6 which should be applied to estimates of language usage and ability to speak English.

Standard errors for percentages from the CPS in this report can be calculated using the following formula:

$$s.e. = \sqrt{(b/N)(p)(100 - p)}$$

where p is the percentage ($0 < p < 100$)
N is the population on which the percentage is based
b is the parameter 2,532 for total and English-only persons and 5,772 for non-English speakers. NOTE that for 1979 the b parameter should be multiplied by 0.68.

Standard errors for percentages from the decennial census in this report can be calculated using the following formula:

$$s.e. = b\sqrt{(5/N)(p)(100 - p)}$$

where p is the percentage ($0 < p < 100$)
N is the population on which the percentage is based
b is the standard error adjustment factor 1.6 which should be applied to estimates of language usage and ability to speak English.

All comparisons discussed in the text are statistically significant at the .05 level. The comparisons of percentages in the text were all tested for statistical significance using t-tests to ensure that the differences were larger than might be expected due to sampling variation. All comparisons were tested using the Bonferroni adjustment for multiple comparisons, where such adjustments were appropriate.

APPENDIX D. STANDARD ERROR TABLES

Standard errors for Table 2.

Language	1979 Number	1979 %	1989 Number	1989 %	Change 1979-89* Number	Change 1979-89* %
Total 5 years and over	887.8	--	1141.1	--	1445.8	0.2
Total with reported language characteristics	873.3	0.3	1111.7	0.3	1413.6	0.4
Total reporting a language other than English	263.1	--	378.6	--	461.0	0.2
(Percent of persons with reported language who speak language other than English)	0.1	--	0.2	--	--	--
Spanish	185.5	0.7	289.2	0.8	343.6	1.1
Other European languages	157.3	0.7	172.6	0.6	233.5	0.9
French	62.2	0.3	79.0	0.3	100.6	0.5
Italian	72.9	0.4	72.3	0.3	102.7	0.5
German	70.4	0.4	70.0	0.3	99.2	0.5
Polish	53.6	0.3	51.2	0.2	74.1	0.4
Portuguese	31.0	0.2	47.8	0.2	56.9	0.3
Greek	37.9	0.2	40.5	0.2	55.4	0.3
Creole	8.9	0.1	32.9	0.1	34.0	(B)
Yiddish	30.3	0.2	30.5	0.1	43.0	0.2
Hungarian	20.4	0.1	26.8	0.1	33.6	0.2
Russian	16.0	0.1	25.9	0.1	30.4	(B)
Norwegian	17.4	0.1	23.0	0.1	28.9	0.1
Swedish	15.8	0.1	21.9	0.1	27.0	(B)
Dutch	19.5	0.1	21.5	0.1	29.0	0.1
Slovak	17.9	0.1	20.8	0.1	27.5	0.1
Czech	21.3	0.1	19.5	0.1	28.9	0.1
Finnish	16.3	0.1	19.1	0.1	25.1	(B)
Ukrainian	17.9	0.1	18.1	0.1	25.5	0.1
Serbocroatian	21.6	0.1	17.7	0.1	27.9	0.1
Lithuanian	15.6	0.1	13.8	0.1	20.8	(B)
Asian and Pacific Island languages	82.1	0.4	140.0	0.5	162.3	0.7
Chinese languages	44.9	0.3	69.4	0.3	82.7	0.4
Philippine languages	40.6	0.2	60.7	0.2	73.0	0.3
Korean	27.4	0.2	53.9	0.2	60.4	0.3
Vietnamese	24.8	0.1	47.9	0.2	54.0	0.2
Japanese	32.3	0.2	46.2	0.2	56.4	0.3
Asian Indian languages	19.6	0.1	40.5	0.2	45.0	0.2
Lao	--	--	32.3	0.1	--	--
Cambodian	5.2	0.0	28.9	0.1	29.4	(B)
Thai	11.2	0.1	15.6	0.1	19.2	(B)
Other languages	57.6	0.3	101.7	0.4	116.9	0.5
Arabic	26.4	0.1	45.4	0.2	52.5	0.2
American Indian/Alaska Native languages	27.0	0.2	37.3	0.1	46.0	0.2
Persian	18.9	0.1	30.0	0.1	35.5	0.2
Armenian	17.1	0.1	25.5	0.1	30.7	(B)
Other unlisted	35.3	0.2	73.1	0.3	81.2	0.4

* Numbers in parentheses indicate a negative figure.

-- Not applicable or not available.

(B) The base of the derived figure is less than 75,000.

NOTE: In general, this table matches the data from the previous table. "Other unlisted" includes some languages in the 1989 tabulations which, in the 1979 tabulations were grouped with "Other European" or "Asian and Pacific Island." If the 1979 figures were adjusted to match those available for 1989:

- the "Other European" category would decline by 165 thousand;
- the "Asian and Pacific Island" category would decline by 35 thousand;
- the "Other Language" category and the "Other unlisted" subcategory would each increase by 200 thousand.

Some categories represent groups of languages. These include: American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian Indian, Chinese and Philippine.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November Current Population Survey, 1979 and 1989.

Standard Errors for Table 3.

Language	1989	Age		
	Total	5 – 17	18 – 64	65 +
American Indian/ Alaska Native languages	37.3	6.2	7.7	6.6
Arabic	45.4	5.4	5.8	2.8
Armenian	25.5	9.4	10.7	7.1
Asian Indian languages	40.5	5.9	6.3	3.1
Cambodian	144.9	39.5	59.7	0.8
Chinese languages	69.4	3.1	3.7	2.6
Creole	32.8	7.0	7.2	1.8
Dutch	21.5	5.3	12.8	12.4
French	79.0	2.4	3.3	2.8
German	70.0	2.1	3.9	3.6
Greek	40.5	5.2	6.2	4.3
Hungarian	26.7	6.5	10.7	10.8
Italian	72.3	1.6	4.0	3.9
Japanese	46.2	3.8	6.0	5.5
Korean	53.9	4.6	4.9	2.4
Lao	32.3	8.5	8.7	3.0
Norwegian	23.0	6.1	12.3	12.5
Persian (Farsi)	30.0	6.8	7.4	3.6
Philippine languages	60.7	3.5	4.2	2.8
Polish	51.2	2.8	5.6	5.6
Portugesee	47.8	4.5	5.5	4.1
Russian	25.9	6.7	10.8	9.9
Spanish	289.2	0.9	0.9	0.5
Swedish	21.9	11.4	13.2	11.4
Vietnamese	47.9	5.7	5.8	2.1
Yiddish	30.5	8.1	8.8	9.4
Other	73.1	3.2	3.6	2.3
TOTAL	378.6	0.6	0.7	0.5

NOTE: Some categories represent groups of languages. These include: American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian Indian, Chinese, Philippine. Only languages with at least 75,000 reported speakers are shown. Detail may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November Current Population Survey, 1979 and 1989.

Standard Errors for Table 4.

Year and population characteristic	Total 1/	Language spoken at home: English only	Speak other languages: Total	Spanish	Other European	Asian or Pacific Island	All other
Total persons, 1979	588.0	551.0	263.1	185.5	157.2	82.1	57.6
Total persons, 1989	755.8	689.3	378.6	289.2	172.6	140.0	101.7
AGE DISTRIBUTION, 1979							
5 to 17 years	0.1	0.1	0.6	1.0	0.8	1.9	2.7
18 to 24 years	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.8	0.7	1.6	2.6
25 to 44 years	0.1	0.1	0.7	1.0	1.0	2.3	3.3
45 to 64 years	0.1	0.1	0.6	0.8	1.2	1.9	2.3
65 years and over	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.5	1.1	1.4	2.0
AGE DISTRIBUTION, 1989							
5 to 17 years	0.1	0.1	0.6	0.9	1.0	1.7	2.3
18 to 24 years	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.7	0.9	1.2	1.7
25 to 44 years	0.2	0.2	0.7	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.8
45 to 64 years	0.1	0.1	0.6	0.7	1.5	1.6	2.2
65 years and over	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.5	1.5	1.2	1.7
IMMIGRATION STATUS, 1979							
Born in 50 States or D.C.	0.1	0.0	0.7	1.1	1.2	1.9	3.3
Born in Puerto Rico	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Born in U.S. Outlying Area	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.0
Born outside U.S.	0.1	0.0	0.7	1.0	1.2	1.9	3.3
Year to U.S.:							
1975-1979	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.6	0.5	2.3	3.2
1970-1974	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.6	0.6	1.9	2.2
1965-1969	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.5	0.6	1.5	1.6
1960-1964	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.9	0.9
Before 1960	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.5	1.1	1.5	2.0
IMMIGRATION STATUS, 1989							
Born in 50 States or D.C.	0.1	0.0	0.8	1.0	1.5	1.7	2.8
Born in Puerto Rico	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.4
Born in U.S. Outlying Area	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.8
Born outside U.S.	0.1	0.0	0.8	1.0	1.5	1.7	2.8
Year to U.S.:							
1985-1989	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.6	0.9	1.7	2.3
1980-1984	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.6	0.8	1.8	2.0
1975-1979	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.5	0.7	1.6	1.9
1970-1974	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.5	0.8	1.2	1.4
Before 1970	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.4	0.7	0.8	1.0

1/ Total includes some persons for whom language characteristics were not reported.
NOTE: Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November Current Population Survey, 1979 and 1989.

Standard errors for table 5.

Year and population characteristic	Total 1/	Language spoken at home: English only	Speak other languages: Total	Spanish	Other European	Asian or Pacific Island	All other
Total persons, 1979	588.0	551.0	263.1	185.5	157.2	82.1	57.6
Total persons, 1989	755.8	689.3	378.6	289.2	172.6	140.0	101.7
RACE AND ETHNICITY, 1979							
Hispanic	0.1	0.0	0.7	0.7	0.2	0.4	0.6
White,non-Hispanic	0.1	0.1	0.7	0.6	0.5	1.2	3.4
Black,non-Hispanic	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.3	1.4
Other 2/	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.1	0.1	1.3	3.3
RACE AND ETHNICITY, 1989							
Hispanic	0.1	0.1	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.5	1.2
White,non-Hispanic	0.2	0.1	0.7	0.5	1.1	0.9	2.8
Black,non-Hispanic	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.9	0.3	1.2
Other 2/	0.1	0.0	0.5	0.1	0.4	1.0	2.7
Amer. Indian/Alaska Native	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	1.8
Asian/Pacific Island	0.1	0.0	0.5	0.1	0.3	1.1	2.3
Other	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.9
ENGLISH ABILITY, 1979 3/							
Speak English: Very well	--	--	0.7	1.1	1.1	2.4	3.4
Well	--	--	0.6	0.9	0.9	2.2	2.9
Not well	--	--	0.5	0.8	0.7	2.0	2.2
Not at all	--	--	0.4	0.6	0.4	1.0	1.8
ENGLISH ABILITY, 1989 3/							
Speak English: Very well	--	--	0.8	1.0	1.6	2.1	2.8
Well	--	--	0.6	0.8	1.3	1.8	2.4
Not well	--	--	0.6	0.8	1.0	1.6	1.9
Not at all	--	--	0.4	0.6	0.5	1.1	0.9
LANGUAGE FREQUENCY, 1989 4/							
Compared to English how often speak other language at home:							
All the time	--	--	0.5	0.8	0.8	1.5	1.4
More often	--	--	0.7	0.9	1.1	1.9	2.6
About the same	--	--	0.6	0.8	1.2	1.7	2.3
Less than	--	--	0.7	0.8	1.6	1.7	2.5
Rarely speak it	--	--	0.6	0.6	1.6	1.1	2.0

-- Not applicable.

1/ Total includes some persons for whom language characteristics were not reported.

2/ Other includes persons of Asian/Pacific Island and persons of American Indian or Alaska Native ancestry or race.

3/ Distribution was calculated for persons whose English ability was reported.

4/ Information about frequency of language usage in the home compared to English was not collected in 1979.

NOTE: Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November Current Population Survey, 1979 and 1989.

Standard errors for table 6.

Year and population characteristic	Total 1/	Language spoken at home: English only	Speak other languages: Total	Spanish	Other European	Asian or Pacific Island	All other
Total persons, 1979	588.0	551.0	263.1	185.5	157.2	82.1	57.6
Total persons, 1989	755.8	689.3	378.6	289.2	172.6	140.0	101.7
FAMILY INCOME, 1979							
Less than $10,000	0.1	0.1	0.7	1.1	1.2	2.0	3.3
$10,000 to 14,999	0.1	0.1	0.6	0.9	1.0	2.0	2.5
$15,000 to 19,999	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.7	0.9	1.7	2.1
$20,000 to 24,999	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.6	0.9	1.7	2.3
$25,000 to 49,999	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.6	1.0	1.9	2.2
$50,000 and over	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.4	1.1	1.7
FAMILY INCOME, 1989							
Less than $20,000	0.2	0.2	0.8	1.0	1.7	2.0	2.8
$20,000 to 34,999	0.2	0.2	0.7	0.9	1.5	1.7	2.3
$35,000 to 49,999	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.6	1.1	1.6	1.8
$50,000 to 74,999	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.5	1.0	1.5	1.8
$75,000 and over	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.9	1.2	1.3
Persons 25 and over, 1979	464.8	433.6	215.1	137.8	140.2	67.6	45.7
Persons 25 and over, 1989	624.6	572.3	205.3	140.0	90.0	58.7	24.5
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, 1979							
Did not complete high school	0.2	0.2	0.9	1.4	1.4	2.5	4.1
Completed high school	0.2	0.2	0.8	1.2	1.3	2.5	3.4
College 1 year or more	0.2	0.2	0.8	1.1	1.2	2.9	4.3
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, 1989							
Did not complete high school	0.2	0.2	0.9	1.3	1.8	2.0	3.0
Completed high school	0.2	0.2	0.8	1.2	1.7	2.1	3.1
College 1 year or more	0.2	0.2	0.8	1.1	1.8	2.5	3.4

-- Not applicable.

1/ Total includes some persons for whom language characteristics were not reported.

NOTE: Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November Current Population Survey, 1979 and 1989.

Standard Errors for Table 7.

Age and ability to speak English	Total	Language spoken at home:			
		Spanish	Other European	Asian or Pacific Is.	All other
Total	378.6	289.2	172.5	140.0	101.7
With difficulty speaking English (number)	254.9	202.7	96.0	103.5	63.0
(Percent of speakers)	0.8	1.0	1.6	2.1	2.8
5 to 17 years	173.6	143.9	55.1	64.8	46.8
With difficulty speaking English (number)	102.2	86.2	27.5	39.3	26.6
(Percent of speakers)	1.6	1.9	4.5	4.3	5.8
18 to 24 years	133.1	111.7	49.8	41.9	31.7
With difficulty speaking English (number)	85.0	75.7	24.2	24.2	18.1
(Percent of speakers)	2.1	2.6	4.9	6.5	8.5
25 to 44 years	227.0	176.3	90.4	89.7	65.0
With difficulty speaking English (number)	158.2	127.3	49.6	68.4	41.2
(Percent of speakers)	1.3	1.6	2.9	3.2	4.4
45 to 64 years	166.1	119.3	87.5	61.6	43.7
With difficulty speaking English (number)	120.4	91.2	53.1	50.8	28.2
(Percent of speakers)	1.7	2.4	3.2	4.3	6.5
65 years and over	128.0	71.8	91.7	42.4	31.8
With difficulty speaking English (number)	88.3	58.5	50.9	36.5	21.0
(Percent of speakers)	2.3	3.8	2.9	5.9	9.0

NOTE: Not included in base for percentages are those persons who did not report language ability.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November Current Population Survey, 1989.

Standard errors for Table 8.

Age and immigration status	Speak a language other than English at home		
	Total	Speak English	
		Very well	With difficulty
Total	368.5	281.7	237.6
Percent	--	--	--
Born in 50 States or D.C.	0.5	0.6	0.7
Born in Puerto Rico or other U.S. outlying area	0.2	0.2	0.4
Born outside U.S.	0.5	0.6	0.7
5 to 17 years	173.2	141.0	100.6
Percent	--	--	--
Born in 50 States or D.C.	1.0	1.1	1.9
Born in Puerto Rico or other U.S. outlying area	0.3	0.4	0.6
Born outside U.S.	1.0	1.1	1.9
18 to 64 years	301.6	225.4	200.5
Percent	--	--	--
Born in 50 States or D.C.	0.6	0.8	0.7
Born in Puerto Rico or other U.S. outlying area	0.3	0.3	0.5
Born outside U.S.	0.6	0.8	0.8
Year to U.S.:			
1985 to 1989	0.3	0.3	0.6
1980 to 1984	0.4	0.4	0.7
Before 1980	0.6	0.8	1.0
65 years and over	121.6	93.0	78.3
Percent	--	--	--
Born in 50 States or D.C.	1.6	1.8	2.3
Born in Puerto Rico or other U.S. outlying area	0.6	0.4	1.2
Born outside U.S.	1.5	1.8	2.4
Year to U.S.:			
1985 to 1989	0.3	0.3	0.5
1980 to 1984	0.3	0.1	0.7
Before 1980	1.5	1.8	2.4

NOTE: Not included in base for percentages are those persons who did not report language ability.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November Current Population Survey, 1989.

Standard Errors for Table 9.

Language spoken and ability to speak English	1979				1989			
	Total	Enrolled in school	Behind modal grade for their age		Total	Enrolled in school	Behind modal grade for their age	
			Number	Percent 1/			Number	Percent 1/
All children	327	324	162	0.4	386	384	226	0.5
Children with reported language information	322	320	160	0.4	373	371	218	0.5
Speak English only	309	307	160	0.4	349	347	203	0.5
Speak other language: total 2/	92	55	33	1.3	132	70	42	1.6
Language spoken:								
Spanish	75	45	29	1.7	106	56	35	2.0
All other European languages, total	41	25	11	2.5	40	21	11	4.7
Asian and Pacific Island languages, total	25	15	9	4.8	50	27	14	3.8
All other languages	17	10	(B)	(B)	36	19	11	5.6
With difficulty speaking English, total 3/	48	28	21	2.7	70	37	23	3.0
Language spoken:								
Spanish	42	25	18	3.0	58	31	20	3.6
All other European languages, total	11	9	(B)	(B)	21	11	(B)	(B)
Asian and Pacific Island languages, total	16	9	(B)	(B)	26	14	8	7.6
All other languages	10	6	(B)	(B)	19	10	(B)	(B)
Children with no reported language information	52	52	25	2.6	100	100	61	1.9

1/ Percent of total enrolled in school.

2/ This total includes some children for whom a specific language was not reported.

3/ Persons who are tabulated under "with difficulty speaking English" were reported to speak English less than "Very well."

(B) The base of the derived figure is less than 75,000.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, October and November Current Population Survey, 1979 and 1989.

Standard Errors for Table 10.

Year, language and grade	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Other
1979					
Enrolled in school*	214.6	188.4	94.8	83.7	43.9
Below modal grade (%)	0.3	0.4	1.2	2.2	4.1
Speak only English at home	203.1	183.4	92.5	43.1	32.8
Below modal grade (%)	0.4	0.4	1.2	4.0	5.0
Speak other language at home	60.1	32.7	11.1	69.7	27.2
Below modal grade (%)	1.4	2.3	(B)	2.8	7.2
1989					
Enrolled in school*	254.5	213.7	115.3	124.1	75.7
Below modal grade (%)	0.5	0.6	1.5	2.3	3.5
Speak only English at home	230.0	202.5	109.5	66.3	50.0
Below modal grade (%)	0.5	0.6	1.5	4.2	5.2
Speak other language at home	86.6	39.5	17.4	101.0	53.1
Below modal grade (%)	1.4	2.7	9.5	2.8	5.0

(B) The base of the derived figure is less than 75,000.
* Children for whom no language characteristics were reported are included in the totals but not shown separately.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November Current Population Survey, 1979 and 1989.

Standard Errors for Table 11.

Year, ethnicity, place of birth, and below modal grade	Total	Language spoken at home: Speak only English	Language spoken at home: Speak other
1979			
Hispanic*	83.7	43.1	69.7
% below modal grade	2.2	4.0	2.8
Born in 50 States and D.C.	73.2	42.3	59.8
% below modal grade	2.5	4.0	3.1
Born elsewhere	36.9	8.7	35.9
% below modal grade	5.3	(B)	5.5
Nonhispanic*	207.3	201.1	38.5
% below modal grade	0.4	0.4	2.0
Born in 50 States and D.C.	202.2	199.8	31.3
% below modal grade	0.4	0.4	2.3
Born elsewhere	32.0	23.0	22.3
% below modal grade	2.5	3.1	3.8
1989			
Hispanic*	124.1	66.3	101.0
% below modal grade	2.3	4.2	2.8
Born in 50 States and D.C.	109.4	65.5	87.6
% below modal grade	2.6	4.3	3.2
Born elsewhere	47.8	9.0	46.9
% below modal grade	6.0	(B)	6.1
Nonhispanic*	240.8	225.8	54.9
% below modal grade	0.5	0.5	2.1
Born in 50 States and D.C.	228.4	223.8	45.4
% below modal grade	0.5	0.5	2.5
Born elsewhere	37.4	22.2	30.1
% below modal grade	3.2	5.7	3.9

* Totals for Hispanics and Nonhispanics include some children whose country of birth and/or language was not reported.
NOTE: Born elsewhere includes Puerto Rico, the other U.S. Outlying Areas, and all other countries.
(B) Base is less than 75,000.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. October and November Current Population Survey, 1979 and 1989.

Standard errors for table 12.

Language spoken at home and percent below modal grade	Total children	Parent's educational attainment					No parent parent in household
		Less than 5 years	5 to 8 years	9 to 11 years	Completed high school	College 1 or more years	
All children 1/	254.5	35.0	64.1	87.2	161.2	167.0	55.4
Percent of total	--	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.2
Percent below modal grade	0.5	3.7	2.0	1.5	0.8	0.7	2.3
Speak only English at home	238.9	14.3	45.3	79.0	147.9	155.2	51.0
Percent of total	--	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.2
Percent below modal grade	0.5	9.2	2.9	1.7	0.8	0.8	2.6
Speak other language at home 2/	130.7	44.1	61.2	42.6	68.4	64.5	27.3
Percent of total	--	1.4	1.8	1.4	2.0	1.9	0.9
Percent below modal grade	2.1	6.5	4.7	6.7	3.9	3.9	10.2
Spanish	104.6	37.9	53.4	38.6	54.6	41.3	21.8
Percent of total	--	1.9	2.4	1.9	2.5	2.0	1.1
Percent below modal grade	2.7	7.6	5.4	7.4	4.9	6.3	13.2
Other European language	40.1	10.9	16.3	10.6	24.5	20.7	8.6
Percent of total	--	3.8	5.4	3.7	7.0	6.4	3.0
Percent below modal grade	6.4	(B)	(B)	(B)	8.5	(B)	(B)
Asian/Pacific Island language	49.8	16.2	13.7	6.0	24.8	35.1	11.9
Percent of total	--	3.6	3.1	1.4	5.0	5.8	2.7
Percent below modal grade	5.2	(B)	(B)	(B)	11.5	6.7	(B)
All other languages	35.8	6.0	16.2	9.6	16.4	24.6	4.4
Percent of total	--	2.7	6.5	4.2	6.6	8.0	2.0
Percent below modal grade	7.7	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)	10.3	(B)

(B) Base is less than 75,000

1/ Totals include some children whose language was not reported.

2/ Includes some children for whom specific language was not reported.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. Otober and November Current Population Survey, 1979 and 1989.

Standard Errors for Table 13.

Enrollment status	Total*	Speak only English	Speak other language at home				
			Total	Spanish	Other European	Asian or Pacific Island	All other
Total	284.3	257.1	155.9	126.0	55.3	48.8	35.2
Percent enrolled in college	0.4	0.4	1.4	1.5	4.7	5.6	7.3
Percent not enrolled and completed high school	0.4	0.5	1.7	2.1	5.0	4.9	7.8
Percent enrolled below college	0.4	0.4	1.6	2.0	4.4	5.7	6.8
Percent not enrolled and not completed high school	0.3	0.3	1.6	2.1	3.2	3.3	6.1

* Total includes some persons for whom language characteristics were not reported.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November Current Population Survey, 1989.

Standard Errors for Table 14.

Enrollment status	Speak only English	Speak language other than English at home								
		All languages			Spanish			All other languages		
		Total 1/	Speak English		Total 1/	Speak English		Total 1/	Speak English	
			Very well	With difficulty 2/		Very well	With difficulty 2/		Very well	With difficulty 2/
Total	284.3	150.2	117.1	92.8	126.0	94.4	82.4	81.8	60.3	42.8
Percent enrolled in college	0.4	1.2	1.7	1.3	1.0	1.6	1.0	2.1	2.6	3.5
Percent not enrolled and completed high school	0.4	1.4	1.9	2.1	1.4	1.5	2.1	2.2	2.6	4.1
Percent enrolled below college	0.4	1.1	1.5	1.6	1.3	1.8	1.7	2.1	2.4	4.0
Percent not enrolled and not completed high school	0.3	1.3	1.4	2.3	1.4	1.9	2.3	1.5	1.4	3.7

1/ Total includes some persons for whom language ability was not reported.
2/ Persons tabulated under "with difficulty" were reported to speak English less than "Very well."

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November Current Population Survey, 1989.

Standard Errors for Table 15.

Language spoken and enrollment status	Total*	Place of birth:				
			Foreign born			
		50 States or D.C.	Total	Year of immigration:		
				1985–89	1980–84	Before 1980
All languages	123.9	86.9	83.0	53.5	44.2	45.5
Percent enrolled in college	1.8	2.6	2.5	3.2	4.5	5.7
Percent not enrolled and completed high school	2.1	3.0	3.3	4.9	6.0	6.3
Percent enrolled below college	2.0	2.9	2.8	3.9	5.6	5.6
Percent not enrolled and not completed high school	2.0	2.4	3.3	5.2	6.3	5.3
Spanish	103.9	73.8	68.0	45.4	35.9	35.7
Percent enrolled in college	1.5	2.4	2.0	2.4	2.8	5.2
Percent not enrolled and completed high school	2.1	3.0	3.2	4.8	6.1	6.3
Percent enrolled below college	2.0	3.0	2.6	3.7	4.9	5.6
Percent not enrolled and not completed high school	2.1	2.6	3.5	5.2	6.6	5.8
All other languages	67.4	45.8	47.5	28.3	25.7	28.2
Percent enrolled in college	3.2	4.9	4.5	7.1	8.4	7.9
Percent not enrolled and completed high school	3.3	4.8	4.7	8.0	8.2	8.1
Percent enrolled below college	3.1	4.6	4.5	7.0	9.0	7.1
Percent not enrolled and not completed high school	2.2	3.1	3.3	6.8	4.5	4.8

* The total includes persons born in Puerto Rico or the other U.S. Outlying Areas as well as persons who did not report place of birth. These persons are not shown separately.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. November Current Population Survey, 1989.

Standard errors for Table 16.

Language spoken, presence of parent and parent's education	Total	Percent			
		Enrolled in college	Not enrolled completed high school	Enrolled below college	Not enrolled and not completed high school
Total *	284.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3
Less than 5 years	33.2	2.4	3.6	3.5	3.3
5 to 8 years	63.8	1.4	1.8	1.8	1.6
9 to 11 years	76.6	1.1	1.6	1.6	1.2
Completed high school	137.6	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.5
College 1 or more years	141.8	0.9	0.7	0.9	0.3
No parent in household	175.3	0.5	0.7	0.3	0.6
Speak English only	257.2	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.3
Less than 5 years	20.8	4.0	5.8	5.4	5.8
5 to 8 years	49.8	1.8	2.4	2.3	2.4
9 to 11 years	69.9	1.2	1.7	1.7	1.4
Completed high school	128.2	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.6
College 1 or more years	131.4	1.0	0.8	0.9	0.3
No parent in household	157.0	0.7	1.0	0.4	0.6
Speak Spanish	126.0	1.5	2.1	2.0	2.1
Less than 5 years	36.0	4.6	7.4	7.5	7.2
5 to 8 years	49.3	4.6	5.0	5.6	4.7
9 to 11 years	33.2	4.7	7.9	8.5	7.2
Completed high school	43.3	5.7	5.8	6.5	4.2
College 1 or more years	41.1	6.7	5.4	7.0	2.3
No parent in household	86.6	1.4	3.3	1.7	3.3
Speak other language	81.7	3.2	3.3	3.1	2.2
Less than 5 years	12.7	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)
5 to 8 years	28.0	7.3	9.8	9.6	8.1
9 to 11 years	18.1	(B)	(B)	(B)	(B)
Completed high school	33.9	7.6	7.2	8.4	3.7
College 1 or more years	43.9	6.5	4.4	6.4	2.2
No parent in household	48.4	5.1	6.0	2.9	4.6

* Total includes some persons for whom language characteristics were not reported.
-- Not applicable.
(B) Base is less than 75,000.
NOTE: Parent's education is not known for persons not living in the same household as their parent. These persons are shown separately.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November Current Population Survey, 1989.

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U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1993 - 300-807 - 814/93113

ISBN 0-16-042998-6

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